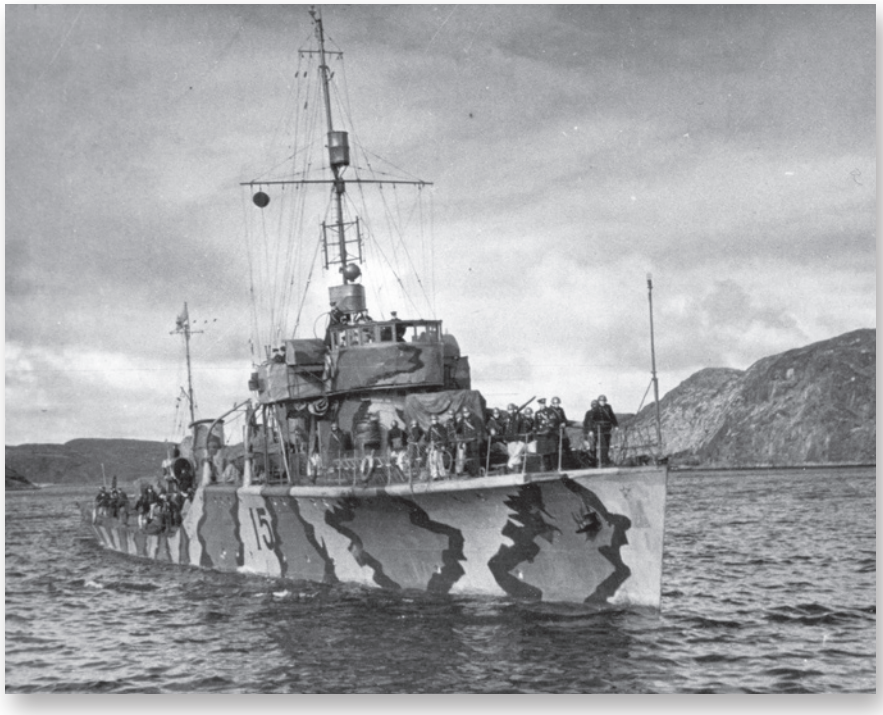
SOVIET DESTROYERS OF WORLD WAR II

ALEXANDER HILL

ILLUSTRATED BY FELIPE RODRÍGUEZ

NEW VANGUARD 256

SOVIET DESTROYERS OF WORLD WAR II



ALEXANDER HILL ILLUSTRATED BY FELIPE RODRÍGUEZ

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SOVIET DESTROYERS OF WORLD WAR II

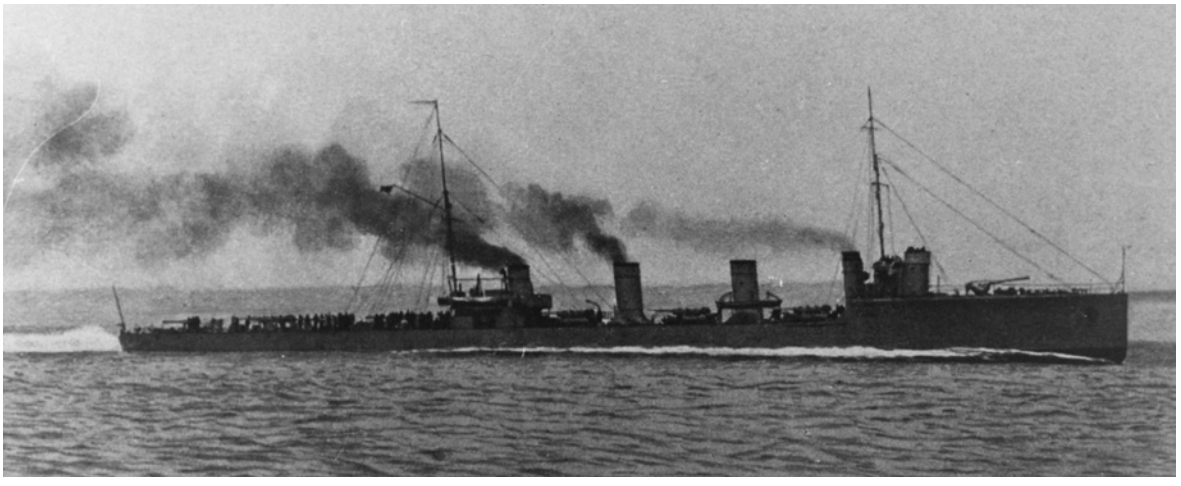
INTRODUCTION

This book examines the design, construction, modification and operational use of destroyers and equivalent vessels that were built or modified in the Soviet Union, and that saw meaningful service during the Great Patriotic War. It therefore includes not only the numerous Soviet Type 7 and 7Us, the destroyer leaders of the Leningrad class and *Tashkent*, but also the Novik class, the sole Project 45 destroyer *Opitnii* and the Uragan-class guard ships.

The Great Patriotic War began on 22 June 1941 and officially ended for Soviet forces in Europe on 9 May 1945, although Soviet forces subsequently saw action in the Far East from 9 August to 2 September 1945. Before looking at Soviet destroyers serving in both European and Far Eastern waters by class, this book begins with the broader development of Soviet naval forces in the aftermath of the Russian Civil War of 1917–21, a war that brought most of the former tsarist empire and fleet under the control of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

Although the Bolsheviks had seized power in Petrograd in October 1917, it took until 1921 for their Soviet regime to secure control over most of what had previously been the Russian Empire. Although many sailors had been staunch supporters of the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War, their contribution to Soviet victory had typically been as infantry on land rather than with their ships at sea. In fact, by the end of the Civil War many of their former ships had been sunk or scuttled, with many of the remainder in a very poor state of repair. By 1921 Soviet naval forces were left with less than 20 per cent of the tonnage of the tsarist navy of 1917. For a range of reasons, from the absence of immediate naval threats to financial cost, resurrecting tsarist-era naval power was not high on the list of priorities for the new Soviet government during the early 1920s. The cause of the navy was not helped by an uprising against the Bolsheviks at the Kronstadt naval base in March 1921. One by one many of the remaining tsarist warships ended up in the scrapyard as the Soviet regime focused its remaining naval assets on the Baltic and Black Seas. Although a few destroyers of the wartime Novik class already under construction were finally completed by the Bolsheviks during this period, no meaningful new construction of warships would be initiated until towards the end of the decade.

By the end of the 1920s there had been significant changes in the Soviet Union compared to the first years after the Civil War. Stalin was now in



The *Novik*, lead vessel in her class, on trials in 1913. (Naval History and Heritage Command – NH 95280)

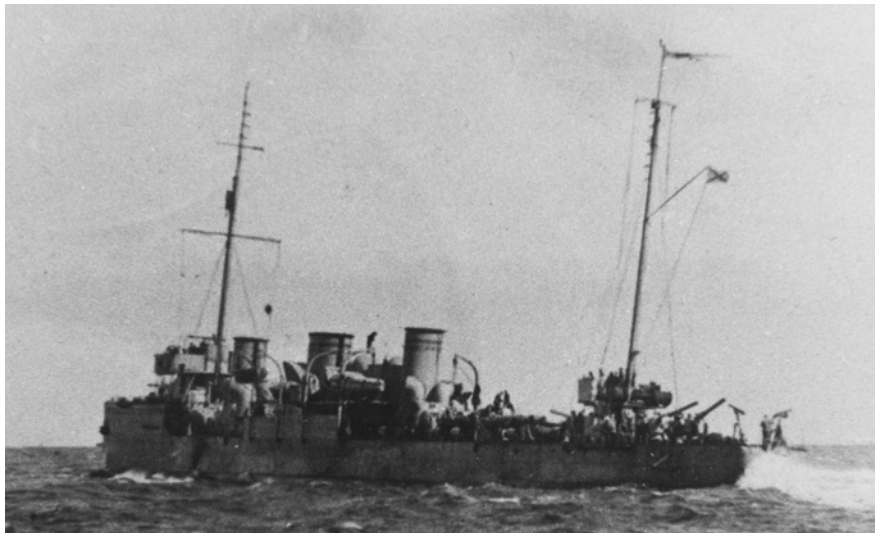
charge, and the Soviet Union was engaged in rapid industrialisation. A core motivation for this rapid industrialisation was defence. Although naval power was part of Soviet defence plans, the lion's share of resources would be expended on tanks, artillery and aircraft. Proponents of building a conventional Soviet fleet could gain little traction in the face of the needs of the air and ground forces, and a Soviet version of the pre-war French *Jeune École* or 'Young School' of naval theory in many ways fitted in nicely with political and financial realities. The Soviet version of the *Jeune École* proposed defending the Soviet coastline with smaller naval units, and in particular submarines and motor torpedo boats – their more conventional rivals seeing a role for larger units in what was still essentially a coastal defence navy. The compromise that resulted in the first Soviet naval construction plans, although favouring smaller units, did not however give up on larger ocean-going vessels. New 'guard ships' or *storozhevie korabli* were in many senses symbolic of the compromise between an ocean-going and coastal force, as well as being suitable warships for Soviet industry to build up experience in warship construction. Equipped not only with 100mm guns but also with torpedoes, the guard ships were in effect small coastal destroyers. These small destroyers – and the Novik-class destroyers – were to be stiffened and led by new flotilla leaders.

The slowly expanding Soviet naval forces of the late 1920s and early 1930s lacked major threats to concern themselves with. The most likely opponent for Soviet naval forces remained the British – whose navy had operated off Russia almost with impunity in the early 19th century, again during the Crimean War and finally once more during the Russian Civil War. By the mid-1930s, however, a re-emergent Germany and the even more credible threat from Japan in the Far East meant that naval power had risen up the political agenda, and Soviet naval forces were now operating not only in the Baltic and Black Seas, but also in 'Northern' and Pacific waters. A Northern Flotilla was formed in June 1933 and subsequently became a full fleet – the Northern Fleet – in May 1937. The Pacific Fleet came into being in January 1935, where from April 1932 naval forces in the region had been part of the Naval Forces of the Far East.

Soviet naval forces in the far north and Pacific were initially dependent on warships constructed in Leningrad. As the 1930s progressed, an increasing

number of warships were being constructed in the Far East. The Northern Fleet would remain dependent on ships built in Leningrad and the Far East until after the Great Patriotic War. In the event that the Baltic Sea was closed off by hostile forces, smaller warships and submarines – including the new Uragan-class guard ships – could in principle be transferred to the Northern Flotilla or Fleet via the Baltic–White Sea Canal, and then, if required, move on to the Pacific by the Arctic Sea Route. In reality, the Baltic–White Sea Canal would very quickly be rendered inoperable by enemy action during 1941. The wartime Northern Fleet was, however, soon strengthened with transfers from the Pacific Fleet across the Arctic, and later with vessels that included Town-class destroyers provided by the Allies.

By the mid-1930s not only did coastal defence mean larger units operating further from Soviet shores, but Stalin undoubtedly wanted the Soviet Union to be taken seriously on the international stage. Part of being a world power was having a credible ocean-going navy for what today would be termed power projection. With foreign assistance – in the case of destroyers, particularly Italian – the Soviet Union was now looking to build an 'ocean-going' fleet that would include new battleships. According to plans of October 1936, by 1939 Soviet industry was supposed to construct a staggering 83 new Project 7 destroyers as part of a major shipbuilding effort that it was hoped would see the Soviet Union become a major naval power by the mid-1940s. In practice, Soviet planners were forced to choose between a myriad of competing defence-related expenditures as a European war loomed on the horizon. Although the construction of battleships was nominally at least not completely abandoned, the reality was that the defence of land borders was the primary concern. In the face of scarce resources a few new battleships languished with construction barely started, and ambitious plans for the production of destroyers were also scaled back. An improved version of the Project 7 destroyer – the Project 7U or *uluchshennii* – continued in production from 1938 but planned production was drastically curtailed. Even such naval construction as continued did not take place at breakneck speed – priorities lay elsewhere – and successors to the Type 7/7U destroyers were being developed only slowly. Remaining resources for naval



The Novik-class vessel *Kapitan Izil'met'ev* in the Baltic in *c.* 1916, shortly after completion. As *Lenin* she would be lost in Soviet service in 1941. (NH 94087)

construction were in many ways dissipated through the need to construct larger units such as destroyers at facilities in the regions in which it was planned they would operate. For example, considerable effort was invested to develop shipbuilding facilities in the Far East.

By the time the 'inevitable' war with Germany began on 22 June 1941 the Soviet navy was far from being the large and nominally modern force projected only a few years before. It was also increasingly apparent that the ships and submarines it did have were often far less capable than those of their adversaries, as a result of design flaws, technological backwardness and poor training. In the case of poor training, the removal of many naval commanders during the infamous Great Purges of 1936–38 not only meant the loss of some experienced personnel, but also damaged the authority of their replacements, who for some time were all too often promoted more on the basis of political than of other credentials. Not only were crews inadequately trained and frequently poorly led, but they had to make do with equipment that was technologically inferior to that available to other major naval powers, and particularly the British and Americans. It is, for example, worth noting that on the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War not a single Soviet destroyer was equipped with SONAR, ASDIC or an equivalent active submarine detection device, nor any form of RADAR. Fortunately for the Soviet Union naval power was not central in the life-and-death struggles of 1941–42 that finally saw the Soviet Union clearly gain the upper hand against the Axis by 1943. However, Soviet naval power had some significance in the maintenance of maritime communications with the Allies in the far north, operations on coastal flanks, and in the short war against Japan in the summer of 1945.

For Soviet naval forces in the Baltic and Black Seas the threat from German airpower was a major inhibitor to the use of larger naval units. Nonetheless, in the Black Sea the destroyers that survived the period of the Axis advance and Soviet retreat saw continued use in fire-support and transport roles in an environment where Axis naval power was at least limited. In the Baltic that was not the case, and after the heavy losses of 1941 the threat from mines added another reason for very limited use of surface vessels even late in the war. In the north the Soviet navy's surviving Novik-class and Type 7 destroyers, Uragan-class guard ships and a Type 38 destroyer leader fought on with an increasing number of British- and US-supplied vessels joining them as the war progressed. British and American naval equipment, and particularly RADAR and ASDIC, also provided some enhancement to the capabilities of select Soviet naval units, including an increasing number of destroyers.

NOVIK CLASS

Tsarist heritage and Soviet modification

The Novik-class destroyers had been the tsarist navy's first steam turbine driven destroyers, the first unit of which had been received by the fleet in 1913. The first vessel, the *Novik*, is depicted in colour plate A at the beginning of World War I. Well-armed and fast, the Noviks were by the standards of World War I capable vessels. Prior to 1918, 29 of the class had entered service, with a further 20 under construction. Ultimately within the class there were considerable variations in design, through what amounted

The cluttered stern of the Soviet Noviks is very apparent in this picture of *Frunze* taken near Odessa in September 1941, showing both 102mm and 21-K AA mounts, along with depth charges. (Sputnik 00002298)

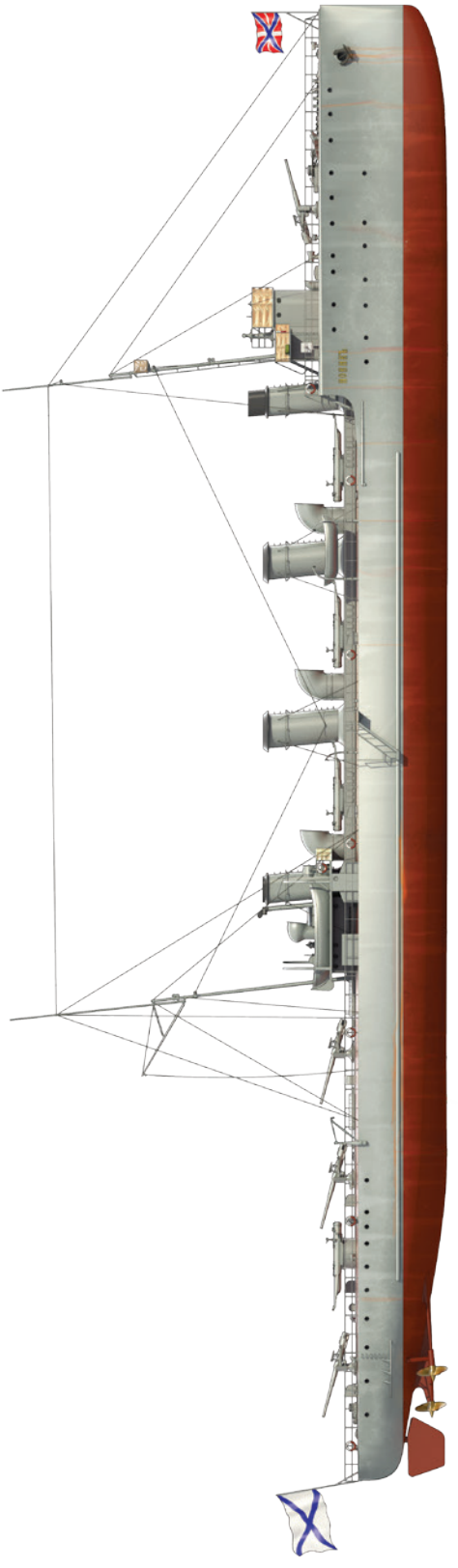
to eight different types, including the lead vessel *Novik* as a standalone type. Over the full production run there was considerable variation in the number of main guns and torpedo tubes (tt), where wartime experience led to a reduction in the latter in favour of the former. The Bolsheviks inherited 11 active Novik-class destroyers out of 28 – one having been lost during World War I.

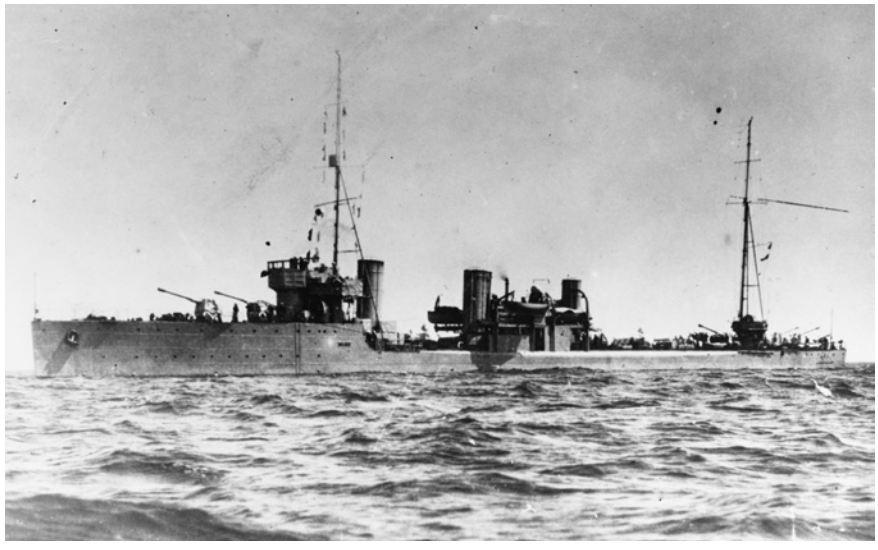
In addition to the 11 vessels taken over by the Bolsheviks from the tsarist navy, the Bolsheviks also inherited six under construction that were to be completed by the new Soviet regime. The Bolsheviks did not update the main armament of the tsarist-era designs prior to the Great Patriotic War, and hence, for example, all continued to use their original 102mm/60-calibre main armaments, with *Frunze* gaining an additional mount from her original three and *Karl Marx* losing one to bring her to the Soviet standard of four. Similarly their torpedo tubes remained pre-Soviet, even if they were all provided with triple tubes rather than the twin tubes initially installed on *Novik*. As with main guns, some vessels lost and others gained sets of torpedo tubes, typically giving the Soviet vessels three sets of three tubes – although *Nezamozhnik*, for example, kept four. During the 1930s their navigational systems and communications were updated – and a degree of protection against chemical attack provided, in particular for those vessels (*Iakov Sverdlov*, *Karl Marx* and *Kalinin*) that were to act as leaders for flotillas (a *divizion* in Soviet parlance). Soviet

A

NOVIK

Initially described as a 'mine cruiser', *Novik* was the lead destroyer in her class. She is pictured here in 1914 prior to the outbreak of World War I, armed with a main armament of four 102mm/60-calibre guns, four sets of twin 450mm torpedo tubes and two 7.62mm Maxim machine guns either side of the bridge. Here her machine guns are shown at deck level, but they could also be mounted immediately above. She could also carry up to 50 mines on rails at the stern. *Novik* not only played a part in the sinking of the German destroyer *V99* on 4 August 1915, but also saw significant action during fighting off the Moonzund Islands in October 1917. During this later action, *Grom* – the only Novik-class vessel lost during World War I – was sunk.





The *Karl Marx*, a final Novik of the eighth and longest *Iziaslav* type, in 1932. She had been *Gromonosets* when laid down on 27 October 1913, but became *Iziaslav* on 14 June 1915 after launching, before finally becoming *Karl Marx* in Soviet service on 31 December 1922. Note the atypical fifth 102mm gun – later removed. Her tripod masts were non-standard as well, with only *Rikov* also having them added in the late 1920s. (NH 71495)

B-1 and M-1 depth charges (dc) along with paravane trawl gear were also added to the Novik class during the 1930s, with some vessels being fitted out to lay mines.

Anti-aircraft or AA armament was one area where there was progressive improvement in the capabilities of the Novik vessels, the first additions in this regard being 21-K semi-automatic 45mm/46-calibre anti-aircraft guns from the mid-1930s. The rate of fire of the 21-K was rather low for an AA gun – only 25–30 rounds a minute – and in other regards the weapon and mount were also somewhat primitive. An improved 45mm/68.6-calibre 21-KM gun with greater range was added to some vessels from 1943, although the rate of fire remained the same as the 21-K. Despite some sources claiming otherwise, it seems that far more effective 37mm/67.5-calibre 70-K automatic anti-aircraft guns were only added to vessels of the class during the war, although from 1938 aging Maxim machine guns were replaced with 12.7mm DShK heavy machine guns. With the addition of 37mm 70-K automatic anti-aircraft guns during the war, there also came further augmentation of anti-aircraft armament that included Allied-supplied 20mm/70-calibre Oerlikon automatic weapons, although there was a lack of centralized fire direction for AA weapons. By the Great Patriotic War, along with the addition of the means of laying a smokescreen, ultimately from all three stacks, degaussing gear to mitigate magnetic mines was added to some vessels in late 1941 and early 1942.

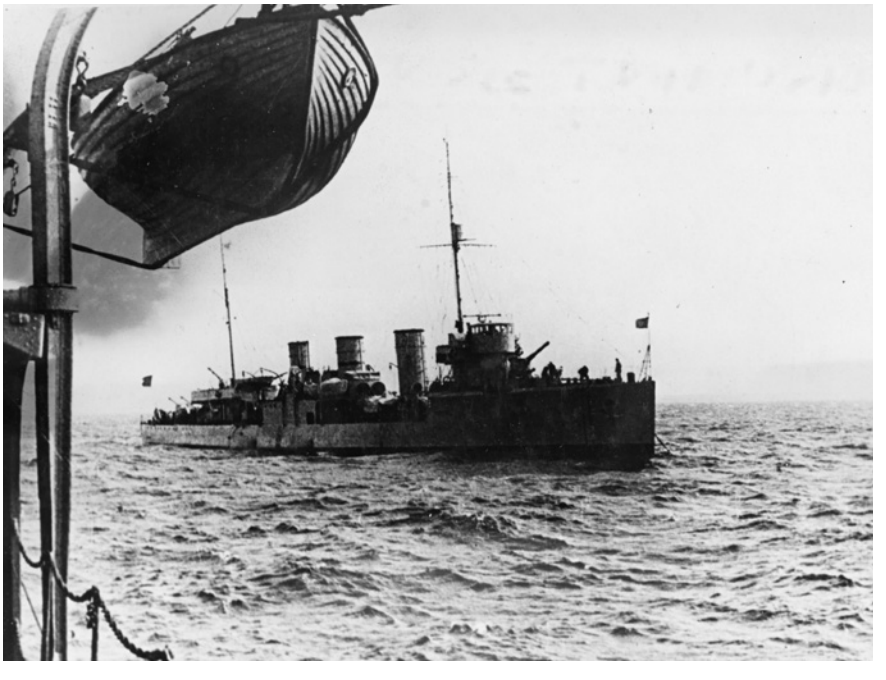
The survivability and effectiveness of some of the remaining Novik-class vessels was enhanced during the war with the installation of both Allied-supplied RADAR and ASDIC on *Karl Libknekht* and *Uritskii* (Type 291 'v' RADAR and Type 128 ASDIC sets given the Soviet designation 'Drakon-128s') and *Valerian Kuibishev* (Type 286 'pv' and SF RADAR and 'Drakon-128s' ASDIC); other surviving vessels also received RADAR sets (both *Zhelezniakov* and *Voikov* receiving Type 291 RADAR) and Soviet SONAR sets developed in the light of Allied-provided sets. With increasing displacements and the fact that the Noviks were in some instances more than 30 years old before the end of the Great Patriotic War, maximum speeds for ships of the class diminished significantly with age. The first vessel of the class,

the former *Novik* – later *Iakov Sverdlov* – increased in standard displacement from 1,597 to 1,717 tons between 1932 and 1940, with supposed maximum speed dropping from 34 to 32 knots even before the war. Actual wartime maximum speeds for all of the class were below 30 knots. Nonetheless in terms of seaworthiness the Novik class arguably exceeded the capabilities of the newer Type 7 and 7U vessels, and ships of the class saw intensive use during the Great Patriotic War.

Wartime service

Prior to the Great Patriotic War five Novik-class vessels of the Baltic Fleet and two of the Northern Fleet saw limited action in the war against the Finns in 1939–40. Ultimately, all 17 of the Soviet Novik-class vessels participated in the Great Patriotic War with all four of the Soviet fleets. Losses amongst the class were heavy, and only seven vessels would survive the war. Of the seven active Novik-class vessels of the Baltic Fleet on 22 June 1941 all had been sunk by the end of August 1941. The *Lenin* – the subject of colour plate B – did not even survive until the end of June 1941 – her fate described in the plate commentary. Many Soviet destroyers were lost during the disastrous retreat from the naval base at Tallinn to Kronstadt in late August 1941. Of the Noviks, on 28 August 1941 *Iakov Sverdlov* was first to be lost to mines, soon followed that same day by *Kalinin*, *Volodarskii* and *Artem*, while *Engels* had been lost to mines on the same route but days earlier, on 24 August. *Karl Marx* was heavily damaged by enemy air attack in Loksa Bight near Tallinn on 8 August, and finally finished off by her own side later that day.

Elsewhere the Novik class fared better, with at least some of the Black Sea vessels surviving the war. *Nezamozhnik* and *Zhelezniakov* of the Black Sea Fleet survived the war after having seen what, by Soviet standards, was intensive service, primarily as transports and in fire-support roles. Not so fortunate were *Frunze*, *Shaumian* and *Dzerzhinskii* – the first of these being



The *Frunze*, a third *Schastlivii*-type Novik, pictured here in *c.* 1936. She had been *Bistrii* until 5 February 1925. Here she has her fourth 102mm gun, bringing her to the Soviet standard of four for the class. (NH 71490)

The *Stalin* in 1936 in the Kara Sea being inspected for ice damage as she was making her way across the Arctic Sea Route to the Pacific. Until 31 December 1922 she had been the *Samson*, and was an *Orfei* fourth-type Novik. (Central Museum of the Navy, St Petersburg - TsVMM 13514).

sunk first by German Ju-87 dive bombers whilst supporting landing operations in the Odessa region on 21 September 1941. *Dzerzhinskii* suffered the fate typical for her sister Soviet Novik-class destroyers in the Baltic, but in this case was lost to a Soviet mine in poor visibility while en route from Novorossiisk to Sevastopol' on 14 May 1942, with the loss of not only most of the crew but also almost all of her 125 passengers. Particularly galling, no doubt, was the loss of *Shaumian* on 3 April 1942 while en route from Novorossiisk to Poti in heavy snow. Soviet accounts of her loss tend to ignore the fact that she ran aground and could not be recovered as a result of navigational error that seems to have been associated with the intoxication of her crew after time ashore.

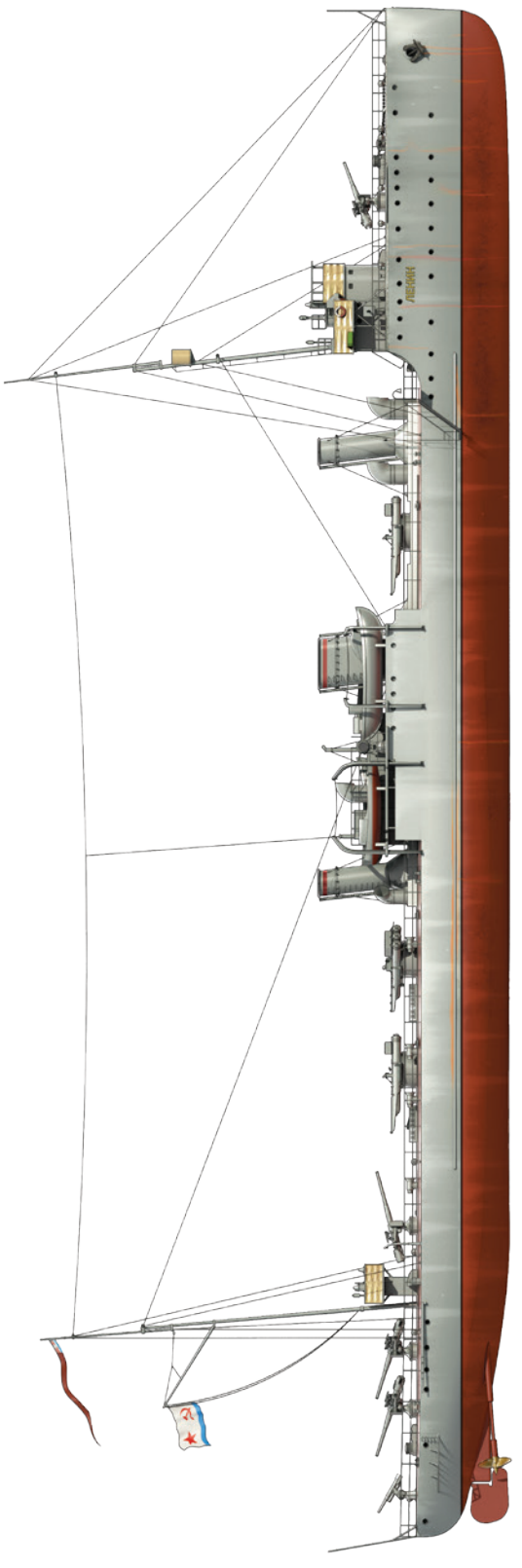
Despite being used relatively intensively for fire support and convoy protection, *Karl Libknekht* and *Uritiskii* of the Northern Fleet survived the war – joined in service in late 1944 by *Valerian Kuibishev*, which had been under capital repair in Molotovsk since the beginning of the war. The final two wartime survivors of the class were *Voikov* and *Stalin* of the Pacific Fleet. Both vessels had made the journey from Soviet northern European waters all the way to the Pacific via the Northern Sea Route and Arctic waters in 1936. The former saw brief action in a fire support and escort role against the Japanese at the very end of the war – the latter avoiding action.

***Iakov Sverdlov* from 13 July 1936, previously *Novik* (non-series first type)**	
Laid down	19 July 1910
Launched	21 June 1911
Entered service	
Tsarist	22 August 1913
Soviet	21 April 1921
Fate	Mined 28 August 1941

B

LENIN

Originally the *Kapitan Izil'met'ev* which entered service on 10 July 1916, and the lead vessel of the fifth design variant of the Novik class, at the very end of 1922 she became the *Lenin*. Like the *Novik*, she participated in fighting off the Moonzund Islands in 1917. Here, in Soviet service *c.* 1940, she had her main and torpedo armament as during World War I – four 102mm/60-calibre guns and three sets of three 450mm torpedo tubes. Her anti-aircraft armament – in addition to two Maxim heavy machine guns – was a single 76.2mm/30.5-calibre 'Lender' of World War I vintage at the stern. According to some sources she had been fitted with a 63.5mm anti-aircraft gun in 1917. Having participated in the war against Finland in late 1939 – including supporting landing operations and providing escort for the battleships – she became a training vessel on 23 March 1940. On the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War she was caught under repair in the port of Libau (now Liepāja) by advancing German forces, and blown up at the quayside by her crew during the night of 24/25 June 1941. Her captain – Iu. M. Afanas'ev – was subsequently shot for 'panic-mongering', with the remainder of crew joining the defenders of the port on land.



Novik/Iakov Sverdlov specifications				
Year	**1913**	**1932**	**1940**	**1941**
Normal displ. (tons)	1,280	1,597	1,717	1,717
Max. length / max. beam / draught (m)	102.43 (336.06ft) / 9.53 (31.27ft) / 2.9 (9.51ft)	102.43 (336.06ft) / 9.53 (31.27ft) / 3.56 (11.68ft)	102.43 (336.06ft) / 9.53 (31.27ft) / 3.53 (11.58ft)	102.46 (336.15ft) / 9.58 (31.43ft) / 3.61 (11.84ft)
Max. speed (knots)	37.2	34	32	30.5
Range (miles)	1,760 (at 21 knots)	1,733 (at 16 knots)	1,800 (at 16 knots)	1,290 (at 20 knots)
Crew	117	134	147	173
Armament	4x 102mm/60; 2x 7.62mm Maxim; 4x (2x 450mm) tt - no reloads; 10 dc (from 1915)	4x 102mm/60; 1x 76.2mm/30.5; 2x 7.62mm Maxim; 3x (3x 450mm) tt – no reloads; 30 dc	4x 102mm/60; 1x 76.2mm/30.5; 4x 12.7mm DK; 3x (3x 450mm) tt – no reloads; 5x B-1 and 16x M-1 dc	4x 102mm/60; 2x 37mm/67.5 70-K; 4x 12.7mm DShK; 3x (3x 450mm) tt – no reloads; 8x B-1 and 20x M-1 dc
System notes	Without fire control for main armament or torpedoes – added for main armament in 1915	–	–	–

BELOW LEFT
Torpedo tubes on a Novik of the Northern Fleet taken during the Great Patriotic War, in all likelihood *Valerian Kuibishev*. Despite little use for the torpedo tubes in practice, and the need for greater AA armament, the Noviks kept their full complements of tubes during the war. (Sovfoto/ MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie, Ontario – 8381)

BELOW RIGHT The *Stalin*, this time with *Voikov* – a *Leitenant Il'in* fourth-type Novik. After having been *Leitenant Il'in* the latter was briefly *Garibaldi* from 3 July 1919, then *Trotskii* from 31 December 1922 to 14 February 1928! Note the removal of their armament for the passage across the Arctic. (TsVMM r-1104-usl)

Valerian Kuibishev from 13 February 1937, *Rikov* from 31 May 1925 to 13 February 1937, previously *Kapitan Kern* to 31 May 1925 (*Leitenant Il'in* type)	
Laid down	21 November 1913
Launched	14 August 1915
Entered service	15 October 1927
Fate	Subject to nuclear test, 1957

Rikov/Valerian Kuibishev specifications		
Year	**1932**	**1944**
Normal displ. (tons)	1,530	1,720
Max. length / max. beam / draught (m)	98.0 (321.52ft) / 9.34 (30.64ft) / 3.73 (12.24ft)	98.0 (321.52ft) / 9.34 (30.64ft) / 3.9 (12.8ft)
Max. speed (knots)	30.5	28.75
Range (miles)	1,800 (at 16 knots)	1,720 (at 16 knots)
Crew	132	182
Armament	4x 102mm/60; 1x 76.2mm/30.5; 2x 7.62mm Maxim; 3x (3x 450mm) tt – four tts for reload; 30 dc	4x 102mm/60; 2x 45mm/68.6 21-KM; 2x 37mm 70-K; 2x 20mm/70 Oerlikon; 2x 12.7mm DShK; 3x (3x 450mm) tt - no reloads; 24x B-1 and 22x M-1 dc; 2x BMB-1 dc throwers
System notes	–	RADAR: SF, 286 'pv' ASDIC:'Drakon-128s'

Valerian Kuibishev, taken from the British vessel HMS *Scylla* in February–March 1943. The effectiveness of her disruptive camouflage for wartime service in the north is apparent in this picture. (Imperial War Museum – IWM A 15369)

URAGAN CLASS (PROJECTS 2, 4 AND 39)

Design, development and modification

The first *storozhevie suda* or guard boats – *Kobchik* and *Korshun* – had appeared in the Russian fleet in 1917 in response to the growing threat from German submarines. The October Revolution prevented completion of the remaining 12 units, but the new type would have appealed to the navy of the new Soviet republic in the early 1920s. The *Kobchik* and *Korshun* had been rather small, slow vessels capable of at best 15 knots with a gun-only armament, but the new Soviet naval leadership sought to develop more capable vessels similar to the faster British P-class sloops of World War I that were effectively coastal destroyers, and had two torpedo tubes in addition to their gun armament. Although there weren't the funds for new construction in the early 1920s, the development of a Soviet guard boat progressed on paper. In the mid-1920s the role of such vessels for the Soviet naval forces was seen to be to protect the aged battleships of the Soviet fleet from submarines, light craft and enemy aircraft as they put to sea, as well as carrying out patrol and reconnaissance, convoy and minelaying work – and even minesweeping. Hence, what the Soviet naval leadership was looking for were indeed small destroyers. By late 1926 there was the prospect of the first Soviet guard boats actually being produced, and plans were finalised for the Soviet Project 2 warships, subsequently often known as the Uragan class. By late 1928 the planned vessels, to be armed with guns, torpedoes and depth charges, and capable of speeds approaching 30 knots when loaded, were to be somewhat more capable vessels than some of the earlier conceptions, and their description was changed from *storozhevie suda* to *storozhevie korabli* or from guard boats to guard ships. Ultimately 18 vessels of the class would be completed in four series over three projects (Projects 2, 4 and 39) and would enter service between 1931 and 1938.

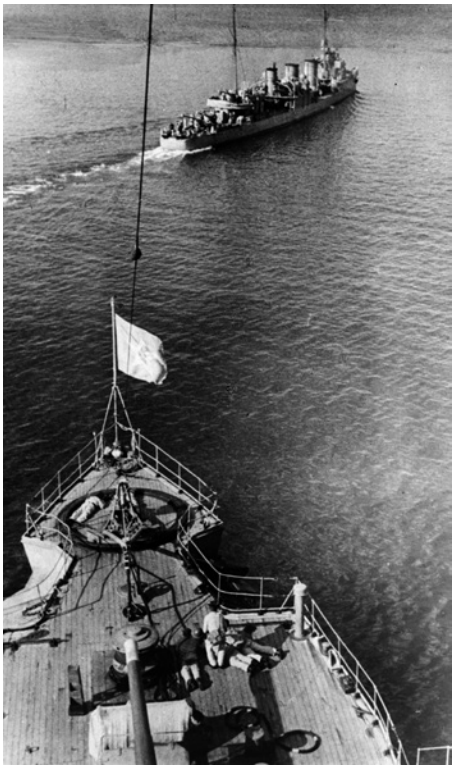
The first vessel had been laid down in August 1927, but would not be handed over to the navy for service until September 1931 due to many issues during construction, including poor performance of the Soviet-manufactured

boilers, which in the end could only deliver a maximum trial speed of 26 knots rather than the planned 29 knots. *Uragan* is pictured at this time in colour plate C. In theory the *Uragan* was to be well armed and equipped for the variety of roles she and her sisters were intended to carry out in the Baltic and Black Seas, but at the beginning of the 1930s all of the new domestically produced weapons intended for installation were simply not available. Main armament and torpedo tubes – of tsarist vintage – were available, the latter 450mm Model 1913 triple tubes. Although her two 102mm/60-calibre main guns would put *Uragan* at a disadvantage against an enemy destroyer – as would her maximum speed of 26 knots that would make effective torpedo attack difficult against many larger and faster vessels – the primary function of the ships of the class was to guard against light attack craft and submarines in coastal waters where they would be protecting even slower vessels. After an initial lack of heavier AA guns in the absence of 11-K 37mm automatic guns that were never delivered, from 1934 21-K 45mm semi-automatic anti-aircraft guns were available and fitted to vessels of the Uragan class. Similarly, plans for the Project 2 vessels had envisioned additional AA armament of three new heavy-calibre machine guns, but such Soviet weapons were also unavailable when *Uragan* joined the fleet and she soon had to make do with two 7.62mm M-1 'Maxim' machine guns. From 1938 these were replaced with 12.7mm DShK guns as they became available, although, for example, in September 1942 when *Purga* was lost she still had two M-1 instead of DShK. As the Great Patriotic War progressed the addition of Allied-supplied 20mm Oerlikon and Colt-Browning machine guns contributed to considerable variation in the AA armament of the class. For example, *Shtorm* of the Black Sea Fleet in 1943 had two 21-KM 45mm semi-automatic guns and three 37mm 70-K automatic guns (one having replaced depth charge throwers), along with two DShK machine guns and a single twin Colt-Browning machine gun, where the standard for the class in 1943 was supposed to be three 37mm automatic and six 12.7mm machine guns. By this point the main armament of some vessels of the class was the B-24-BM 100mm/56-calibre gun, of which a prototype had appeared in 1938. This gun – with shield – had an anti-aircraft capability against low-

Noviks of the Black Sea Fleet in the late 1930s. All the vessels in the picture have modernized bridges. (NH 71492)

flying aircraft that the 102mm guns lacked. *Tucha*, *Taifun* and *Vikhr'* of the Baltic and *Uragan* and *Smerch* of the Northern Fleet certainly received the new gun.

As noted above, it had been intended that the class be able to lay mines, and indeed at the stern there were rails for up to 32 Model 1908–1912 mines. Given the small displacement of the vessels, it is perhaps unsurprising that the weight of such mines proved excessive and it was also a serious operational limitation that with such a complement of mines neither the rear gun nor torpedoes could be fired. Ultimately the number of mines that could be carried was reduced to as few as 16 later KB-series mines (for example, *Shtorm*, in 1943). In addition to trawl gear, degaussing equipment was added in late 1941 and early 1942, with the vessels of this class also being able to protect themselves and their charges with smokescreens. Initially the ships were to have been fitted with gas shelters, but in the end crews had to make do with personal gas masks and protective suits.



A Novik leads what appears to be the aged cruiser *Komintern* out of Odessa in September 1941. All of the Black Sea Noviks had a rear main gun mounted above the main deck. (Sovfoto/Getty 170985735)

Minelaying was undoubtedly in practice a secondary role for the class, whereas anti-submarine warfare was certainly not. As first designed, the class was to be equipped with 20 140kg (309lb) depth charges, from 1933 replaced with varying numbers of 165kg (364lb) B-1 and 41kg (90lb) M-1 variants depending on the configuration of the vessel concerned. During the first months of the Great Patriotic War two BMB-1 depth charge throwers were installed on vessels of the class – subsequently replaced on *Shtorm* and *Shkval* with an additional 37mm AA mount. The additional AA mount on these vessels was added at a time when the U-boat threat was deemed lower than the AA threat in the Black Sea. Strangely, *Taifun* and *Tucha* would lose two 37mm mounts each to gunboats in early 1944. Having depth charges was one thing, being able to find the target was, as for all pre-war Soviet destroyers, another, given the absence of active anti-submarine location equipment such as SONAR and ASDIC. The Project 39 variants of the class were equipped with 'Poseidon' sound location equipment – far inferior to the ASDIC sets which were fitted to ships that underwent repair during the war, not least because the passive sound location could only be carried out when the ship was not under power. By the end of the war a number of vessels of the class had received ASDIC and/or RADAR sets. In the far north *Smerch* seems to have received 'Drakon-123a' ASDIC (by 1944), and a 286 'pv' – later 291 – RADAR set, with *Uragan* also having received a 291 'v' RADAR set and ASDIC (by 1943). *Groza* seems to have only received 'Drakon-128s' ASDIC (by 1943). By 1945, outside the Northern Fleet, *Taifun*, *Vikhr'*, *Shkval*, *Burun*, *Metel'* and *Grom* are all reported to have received 291 RADAR sets. Navigational and communications equipment were also updated in the early 1930s from what to all intents and purposes had been World War I-vintage equipment.

With all the extra equipment added during the war, and wear and tear on propulsion systems, it is perhaps unsurprising that maximum speeds for vessels of the class fell over time. Although *Uragan* had managed to achieve nearly 26 knots on trials in 1930, other units had failed even when new

Crew of an Uragan-class vessel train in their chemical warfare suits in *c.* 1939. In the foreground is a 21-K semi-automatic AA gun. (NH 71494)

to reach that speed. Even after repair in 1942 *Shtorm* only approached 21 knots, a maximum that had dropped to 18 knots by 1944, whereas she had managed almost 26 knots on trial back in 1932.

Wartime service

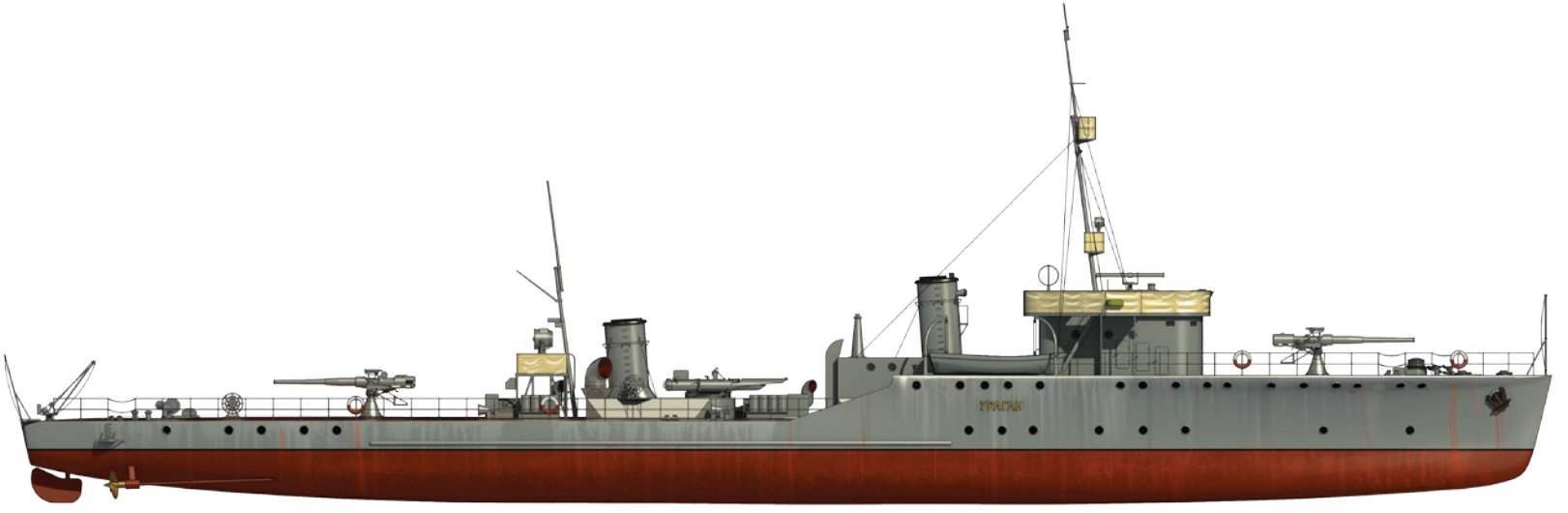
Despite being conceived for operations in the Baltic and Black Seas, vessels of the Uragan class would see service with all four Soviet fleets during the Great Patriotic War and function well even in harsh Arctic waters. Three vessels originally with the Baltic Fleet were transferred via the recently completed Baltic–White Sea Canal in 1933 to the newly created Northern Flotilla – which from 1937 became the Northern Fleet. *Tucha*, *Sneg*, *Tsiklon*, *Vikhr'*, *Buria* and *Purga* of the Baltic Fleet and also *Groza* and to a lesser extent *Smerch* of the Northern Fleet all participated in the 1939–40 war against Finland. Their roles varied from *Smerch*'s screening minelaying off Petsamo, aimed at preventing foreign intervention on the side of the Finns, to more intensive use in the Baltic where they were used to protect and provide fire support for landing operations and escort the battleships.

The Great Patriotic War would see significant losses amongst the Uragan class, although all in the Baltic. The three Uragan-class vessels of the Northern Fleet, *Groza*, *Smerch* and *Uragan*, all survived the Great Patriotic War despite intensive use both as escorts and in fire-support roles, although all three were under repair for meaningful periods due to damage resulting from enemy air attack and wear and tear in a harsh environment for which the class had

C

***URAGAN*, 1931**

The lead vessel of the Uragan class of guard ships, *Uragan* first entered service at the end of 1930. She is pictured here in late 1930/early 1931 when, although having nominally entered service she continued to undergo trials and modification. She is pictured without the two 7.62mm Maxim heavy machine guns soon fitted in the absence of the more modern guns planned. She also lacks heavier anti-aircraft armament intended for installation because the 11-K 37mm guns planned were not available. Both her main armament and torpedo tubes are of tsarist vintage – 102mm/60-calibre guns and triple 450mm Model 1913 torpedo tubes. This profile can be compared to the cutaway (Plate D) for late 1942, showing the extent of later modification from the original.


УРАГАН

ABOVE LEFT
The Uragan-class vessel *Groza* sporting a non-standard disruptive camouflage in the north early in the Great Patriotic War. (TsVMM 33237)

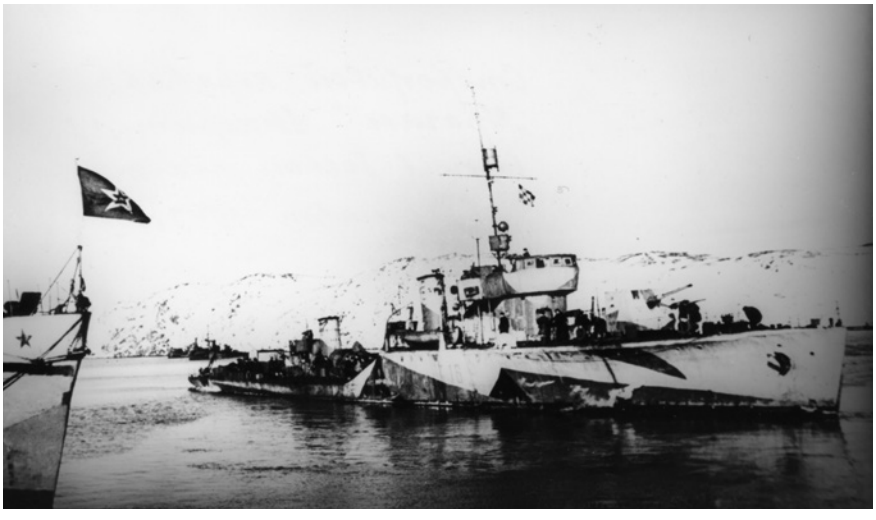
ABOVE RIGHT
Crew of the *Groza* manning the 102mm forward gun – with a good view from the rear of a 21-K AA mount in its far from ideal location. (Sovfoto/ MacLaren Art Centre 8256)

not been designed. Having been put out of action briefly during the summer of 1941 because of splinter damage resulting from air attack, *Smerch* was sunk at the quayside in December 1942 and refloated, but remained out of action until September 1944. No sooner had she returned to service then she hit a mine and was out of action again – returning to service briefly in early 1945 before needing further repair due to storm damage. *Groza* was more fortunate but still under repair for much of 1942–44.

Only two Uragan-class vessels got to enjoy the more suitable waters of the Black Sea – *Shtorm* and *Shkval*. Both saw intensive use in convoy operations and in shelling enemy positions on land, and both survived the war, despite *Shtorm* having been hit by an acoustic torpedo fired from U-9 on 11 May 1944, which caused considerable damage.

The largest number of Uragan-class vessels was with the Baltic Fleet: there were seven on the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War – *Sneg*, *Tsiklon*, *Buria*, *Purga*, *Tucha*, *Taifun* and *Vikhr'*. The first four of these – *Sneg*, *Tsiklon*, *Purga* and *Buria* – were lost in 1941–42. *Tsiklon* and *Sneg* were both lost to mines on 28 and 29 August 1941 respectively during the calamitous retreat from Tallinn, having themselves been laying mines as part of the rearguard. *Buria* was also the victim of a mine, while escorting MTBs in an attack on enemy vessels in Narva Bay on 24 August 1942. *Purga* was, however, lost to enemy air attack on 1 September 1942 after supporting 128 Rifle Division during the Siniavino operation near Leningrad as part of the Ladoga Flotilla. *Purga* was subsequently raised in 1943 but not repaired. *Vikhr'* began the war under repair and was then seriously damaged and sunk at the Kronstadt Naval Works on 22 September 1941. Refloated in 1942, *Vikhr'* was eventually briefly back in service after the war. Only in September 1943 did *Taifun* finally emerge from an overhaul that had begun in 1939. *Taifun* might have emerged earlier had it not been for damage from air attack and shelling during the siege of Leningrad. *Tucha* also spent significant time under repair, as a result of both a Soviet mine on 18 July 1941 and a direct hit from an artillery round in Leningrad on 6 April 1942.

Groza, now sporting a standard disruptive camouflage, in the Kola Bay in 1943. (TsVMM 28093)



Uragan in March 1943 after refit. Note her new 100mm B-24-BM mountings. (TsVMM 27689)

Finally, six Uragan-class vessels served with the Pacific Fleet. *Zarnitsa*, *Burun*, *V'iuga* and *Metel'* acted as troop transports, escorts and minelayers and provided fire support to ground forces during the brief period of fighting with Japan in August–September 1945. *Grom* and *Molnia* did not see action. *Metel'* had the technical distinction of having participated in fighting against the Japanese earlier, doing so during the Lake Khasan conflict in 1939 when she escorted three troop convoys from Vladivostok to Pos'et Bay, returning with wounded.

***Uragan* – Project 2 (Series I)**	
Laid down	14 August 1927
Launched	14 May 1929
Entered service	26 December 1930 (formally 12 September 1931)
Fate	Struck off 5 June 1949

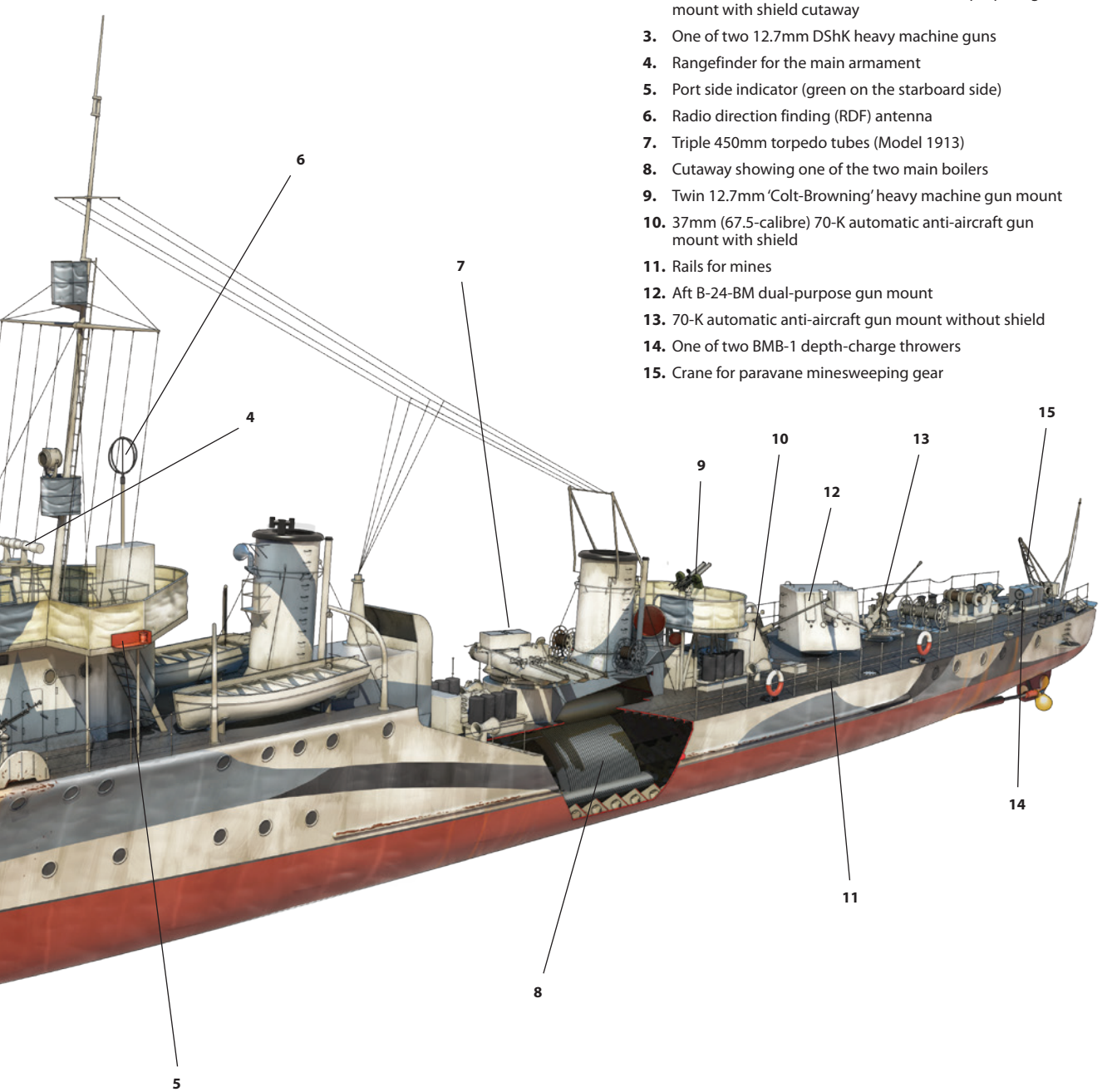
***Uragan* specifications**		
Year	**1930**	**Late 1942**
Normal displ. (tons)	470	562
Max. length / max. beam / draught (m)	71.5 (234.58ft) / 7.4 (24.28ft) / 2.95 (9.68ft) (1943)	
Max. speed (knots)	26	21
Range (miles)	1,200 (at 16 knots)	720 (at 21 knots)
Crew	85	–
Armament	2x 102mm/60; 4x 45mm/46 21-K (from 1934); [2x 7.62mm M-1 added soon after completion]; 1x (3x 450mm) tt – no reloads	2x 100mm/56 B-24-BM; 2x 37mm/67.5 70-K; 2x 45mm/46 21-K; 3x 12.7mm DShK; 1x (3x 450mm) tt – no reloads; 22x B-1 and 15x M-1 dc; 2x BMB-1 dc throwers
System notes	–	RADAR: 291 'v' (1943?) ASDIC: 'Drakon-?'

***Tucha* Project 39 (Series IV)**	
Laid down	27 April 1935
Launched	14 July 1936
Entered service	25 September 1938
Fate	Struck off 12 November 1952

By late 1942 *Uragan* was a very different vessel to the 1931 version as depicted in her colour profile, shown on plate C. In 1933 she had transferred from the Baltic to the far north, joining what was then the Northern Flotilla. Early vessels of the class had first been modernized before the Great Patriotic War from 1938 when they received their enclosed bridges, with *Uragan*'s modernization a protracted process that began in October that year. At the beginning of the Great Patriotic War she was still in dock undergoing a major overhaul and modernization. In the light of her overhaul and damage suffered in a German air attack on 15 August 1941 she did not emerge from dock until 9 September 1942. When she did emerge she was equipped with two B-24-BM 100mm/56-calibre guns with splinter shields in place of her tsarist-vintage 102mm/60-calibre guns, one of her new anti-aircraft capable guns pictured here with the shield cut away. She also had an interesting mix of anti-aircraft guns – two pre-war 21-K 45mm/46-calibre semi-automatics and two 37mm/67.5-calibre 70-K automatic guns, one a wartime variant of the mounting with shield. By 1944 the front 21-K mount had certainly been replaced with a 37mm 70-K mount without shield. In this picture she still has a pre-war twin Colt-Browning heavy machine gun mount, and also has two 7.62mm DShK heavy machine guns. Note also her BMB-1 depth charge throwers at the stern. She is pictured here in a variant of a wartime disruptive camouflage widely used by the Northern Fleet. By this time the brick red decks still typical of the 1930s seem to have been replaced with variants on a grey – *sharovii* – theme. One of her boiler rooms is cut away, showing one of her two boilers of a triangular type set off different sides of the centre line. After September 1942 she had to fire her guns in anger only once in the face of enemy air attack, but despite further time under repair also saw frequent use as a convoy escort.

KEY

1. One of two 45mm (46-calibre) 21-K semi-automatic anti-aircraft gun mounts
2. Forward 100mm (56-calibre) B-24-BM dual-purpose gun mount with shield cutaway
3. One of two 12.7mm DShK heavy machine guns
4. Rangefinder for the main armament
5. Port side indicator (green on the starboard side)
6. Radio direction finding (RDF) antenna
7. Triple 450mm torpedo tubes (Model 1913)
8. Cutaway showing one of the two main boilers
9. Twin 12.7mm 'Colt-Browning' heavy machine gun mount
10. 37mm (67.5-calibre) 70-K automatic anti-aircraft gun mount with shield
11. Rails for mines
12. Aft B-24-BM dual-purpose gun mount
13. 70-K automatic anti-aircraft gun mount without shield
14. One of two BMB-1 depth-charge throwers
15. Crane for paravane minesweeping gear



Crew members of a Uragan-class vessel of the Black Sea Fleet, probably *Shtorm*, eat at their stations in November 1943. Although she now has the 70-K 37mm automatic that is being manned, she still has a 21-K at the stern. (TASS/Getty 522609886)

***Tucha* specifications**		
Year	**1938**	**1943**
Normal displ. (tons)	467	570
Max. length / max. beam / draught (m)	70.1 (229.99ft) / 7.4 (24.28ft) / 2.84 (9.32ft)	
Max. speed (knots)	24	–
Range (miles)	1,200 (at 14.5 knots)	–
Crew	101	109
Armament	2x 102mm/60; 4x 45mm/46 21-K; 2x 12.7mm DShK; 1x (3x 450mm) tt – no reloads; 20x B-1 and 20x M-1 dc	2x 100mm/56 B-24-BM; 3x 37mm/67.5 70-K; 3x twin 12.7mm Colt-Browning; 1x (3x 450mm) tt – no reloads; 20x B-1 and 30x M-1 dc; 2x BMB-1 dc throwers
System notes	–	RADAR: 291 (1945); 'Ultrafon' sound location (passive)

LENINGRAD CLASS (PROJECTS 1 AND 38)

Design, development and modification

In plans of the late 1920s and early 1930s the Uragan class, or Project 2, and their older Novik-class brethren of World War I vintage, were to be led and supported by a series of new Soviet-manufactured destroyer or flotilla leaders. Conceived as early as 1928, the development of the Project 1 design for such vessels began in earnest in September 1930, and by February 1932 the aim was to produce vessels with a normal displacement of 2,250 tons with an impressive maximum speed of 40.5 knots. Given the lack of experience of Soviet industry in the construction of modern warships and pressure for rapid results, this maximum speed was an ambitious goal. Not only the boilers and turbines had to be developed for the destroyer leaders, but also new armament – even if it was to be based on tsarist-era weapons. When the first Project 1 vessels were laid down – *Khar'kov* and *Moskva* in Nikolaev on 19 and 29 October 1932 respectively for the Black Sea Fleet, and *Leningrad* in that city on 5 November 1932 for the Baltic Fleet – much

of their equipment was not even in the advanced stages of development. *Leningrad* was launched on 17 November 1933, but core systems were not installed until 1935, and armament and related equipment followed during the autumn of 1936.

In the end, during state trials prior to the handover of the vessel to the navy, on 5 November 1936 the then 2,225-ton *Leningrad* managed an impressive 43 knots in calm waters. Impressive as this speed was, many flaws in the design and construction soon became apparent. Lifting of the bow – even with extra forward ballast – was dangerously severe. Lifting of the bow was a serious impediment to firing the main armament, and considerable vibration at high speeds as well as the fact that the hull was too weak to allow the main guns all to be fired at once were also major issues. The vessel was difficult to steer at a cruising speed of 30 knots and even at lower speeds – comparing unfavourably in this regard to the aged Novik-class vessels – and there were issues with maintaining the performance of the boilers during operational use. In the political climate of Stalin's Soviet Union of the mid-1930s, where there was overwhelming pressure to have projects completed for key anniversaries and events for example, such issues did not prevent the vessel being accepted into the navy. *Leningrad* was accepted on 5 December 1936 – the day of the introduction of the much trumpeted 'Stalin' constitution for the Soviet Union. The chair of the acceptance commission described the vessel as 'ending up being very much a modern vessel with good running and seakeeping qualities'. This was of course nonsense, and in fact after her acceptance into the navy *Leningrad* would sit at Factory Number 190 until July 1938 as numerous defects were ironed out or at least mitigated.

Meanwhile, *Khar'kov* had been launched on 9 September 1934 and *Moskva* on 30 October of the same year. *Khar'kov* only entered service on 19 November 1938 and *Moskva* slightly earlier on 10 August that year – both joining the Black Sea Fleet. The launch of *Leningrad* back in November 1933 had freed up the slipway for *Minsk* to be laid down on 5 October 1934. In 1936, at a time of considerable international tension, such was the urgency with which *Minsk* was being built that her future crew was brought in to assist in construction. Given the issues with the three vessels of Project 1, the design for *Minsk* and subsequent vessels was modified in an attempt to improve the reliability of the power system and seakeeping, the latter through modification to the bow. These changes were relatively minor and far from solved the problems with the basic design, but nonetheless *Minsk*, *Baku* and *Tbilisi* were completed as Project 38 variants. *Baku* was first laid down on 15 January 1935 at Nikolaev and a second time on the Amur River in the Far East on 10 March 1936. Construction of *Tbilisi* also started on the Black Sea when she was also laid down on 15 January 1935, only for construction to be transferred to the Far East where she too was laid down a second time, in August 1936. All had been completed by the end of 1940. Vessels

The Project 38 Leningrad-class vessel *Minsk* in Riga in 1939. Note just how far forward the bridge structure is, and the identification letters MN in Cyrillic on her hull. These letters were removed during the Great Patriotic War. (Fotosoyuz/Getty 469305997)

The Project 1 Leningrad-class vessel *Khar'kov* laying smoke in the Black Sea, February 1942. (TASS/Getty 522609294)

of the class were named after the capitals of Soviet republics (Khar'kov had been the capital of Ukraine until 1934).

Although designed as destroyer leaders, by the time the Type 1 and 38 vessels entered service they were in terms of armament less powerful vessels than many foreign destroyers. In addition to a respectable main armament of five 130mm/50-calibre B-13 mounts, vessels of the class were equipped with two sets of four 533mm torpedo tubes (N-7) with a full reload for each set of tubes. However, having been designed in the early 1930s, their anti-aircraft armament was by later standards very weak. *Leningrad* and the other Project 1 vessels started out with only two 76.2mm/55-calibre dual-purpose 34-K mounts and two semi-automatic 45mm 21-K as heavier AA. *Leningrad* also had four 12.7mm DK heavy machine guns – *Moskva* and *Khar'kov* having six twin 12.7mm Browning mounts instead. Only in 1943 would *Leningrad* receive four 37mm automatic 70-K mounts, along with a twin 76.2mm/55-calibre 81-K mount and twin German 37mm C-30 mount – later replaced by two more 70-K mounts. For all surviving vessels the 21-K mounts were removed during the war. During the war *Khar'kov* would receive six 37mm 70-K mounts and was the only vessel with a separate fire-control system for AA guns. For the Project 38 vessels, in addition to the base AA armament of the two 76.2mm dual-purpose 34-K mounts, two single 21-K mounts and six 12.7mm DK or DShK machine guns at the start of the Great Patriotic War, *Tbilisi* started the war with an additional 34-K mount. During the second half of the war and with the removal of the 21-K mounts, *Minsk* had six, *Tbilisi* eight and *Baku* an impressive ten 37mm 70-K mounts.

The Leningrad-class vessels, as one might expect, could also lay mines deployed from rails to the rear, and were provided with paravane sweep gear to provide some capacity to deal with moored mines. They were also equipped with depth charge racks, and in the case of *Baku*, from 1944 four BMB-1 depth charge throwers. The class could all lay smoke, and were provided with some level of defence against chemical weapons through filtration systems as well as individual chemical protection such as gas masks. During the war degaussing equipment was added to vessels of the class. *Leningrad* would be provided with Type 291 and SF RADAR through Lend-Lease, *Minsk* with a 291 set, *Baku* with a 286M and later an SF and 284 set, and *Tbilisi* with a 291, SF and 284 set.

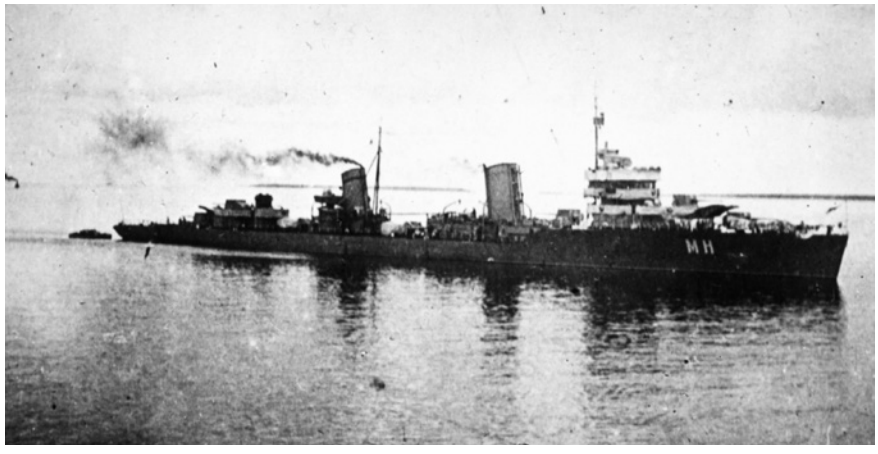
Wartime service

Although the vessels of the class would see heavy use during the Great Patriotic War, poor seaworthiness and stability, weak hulls and poor range all limited their value, along with their inadequate anti-aircraft armament and systems. Prior to the Great Patriotic War, and, it seems, so that the navy did not miss out on participation in the 'liberation' of Western Ukraine and Belorussia from Poland, in mid-September 1939 units of the Baltic Fleet including the leader *Leningrad* put to sea in search of Polish submarines. Justification for such activity was provided by the departure of the Polish

submarine *Orzeł* from Tallinn, where it had been interned by the Estonian authorities. Estonian neutrality did not stop *Leningrad* entering Estonian territorial waters on 24 September and firing on what was supposed to have been 'a secret Polish submarine base'. *Leningrad* again saw action during the Soviet–Finnish War, where she first supported Soviet landing operations. After further fire-support operations at the end of 1939 and in January 1940, *Leningrad* was forced into repair as a result of significant damage due to ice, and did not emerge from that repair until 31 May 1941. *Minsk* was similarly involved in hunting submarines in September 1939 and fire support off Finland during the winter of 1939–40, although she avoided the ice damage suffered by *Leningrad*. That did not mean that *Minsk* would not face lengthy repairs before the Great Patriotic War – during a heavy storm in September 1940 she suffered sufficient damage to her hull to put her out of action until 17 June 1941.

During the Great Patriotic War the Leningrad class saw relatively intensive use, with *Moskva* and *Khar'kov* of the Black Sea Fleet wartime losses, and *Minsk* of the Baltic Fleet sunk but subsequently raised and returned to service. *Moskva* was in fact sunk within days of the start of the war, after having been sent with *Khar'kov* on 26 June to shell the Romanian port of Constanza. After shelling the port, and under fire from the shore, she struck a mine at 0521hrs and within eight to ten minutes had sunk. Many of her crew became prisoners-of-war. *Khar'kov* was damaged by fire from shore batteries when *Moskva* was lost, but managed to escape. During the remainder of 1941 and 1942 *Khar'kov* conducted a variety of missions, from fire support for ground forces to ferrying troop reserves and supplies to the besieged port of Sevastopol'. After having escaped with only relatively minor damage on numerous occasions, she was finally sunk on 6 October 1943 during an ill-advised sortie with *Besposhchadnii* and *Sposobnii* to shell enemy positions at Yalta in the Crimea. Having conducted their shore bombardment at night, the three ships were caught in daylight at 0837hrs by German aircraft. *Khar'kov* was hit during the first attack and after losing power eventually only managed to regain 9 knots by 1400hrs. She was subsequently hit multiple times during further air attacks and sunk at 1537hrs. Many of her crew were picked up by the Type 7U *Sposobnii*, only to lose their lives when she was also sunk.

The Type 7 destroyer *Besposhchadnii* prior to the war, displaying the identification letters BP on her hull. (The Macpherson Collection/TMM)



A pre-war shot of *Minsk*. (The Macpherson Collection/TMM)

Operating in the Baltic, *Minsk* was at least not lost outright. Having survived taking on 600 tons of water after a nearby mine detonation whilst she was providing fire support off Tallinn on 28 August, *Minsk* was sunk at Kronstadt after a series of air attacks on 23 September 1941. She was, however, raised in August 1942, and repairs were officially completed by 28 August 1944, although she did not see further action.

Much of *Leningrad*'s wartime career was spent providing fire support for ground forces from Leningrad, although during late July, August and early September 1941 she was heavily involved in minelaying as well as providing fire support for ground forces off Tallinn. On 11 November 1941 she too was heavily damaged by a mine being exploded nearby during a sweep, but was able to limp back to Kronstadt and then Leningrad.

Baku started the war with the Pacific Fleet, but made her way across the Arctic to the Northern Fleet during a protracted passage lasting from 15 July to 14 October 1942 – along with the Type 7 destroyers *Raz"iarennii* and *Razumnii*. During her service with the Northern Fleet from 16 October 1942 *Baku* was primarily involved in convoy operations. She was heavily damaged in a storm in mid-November 1942 that put her out of action until 15 January 1943. The final vessel of the class, *Tbilisi*, remained with the Pacific Fleet. She saw brief action from 9 August 1945 against the Japanese, on 12 August landing a company-strength force in Pos'et Bay.

The Project 1 vessel *Leningrad* photographed in 1944 by a US naval attaché in the city from which she got her name. Note the third forward 130mm mount tucked in behind the bridge structure. (NARA 80-G-17639)

Leningrad (Project 1)	
Laid down	5 November 1932
Launched	17 November 1933
Entered service	5 December 1936
Fate	Struck off 17 April 1958

Leningrad specifications		
Year	**1936**	**1944**
Normal displ. (tons)	2,282	2,599
Max. length / max. beam / draught (m)	127.5 (418.31ft) / 11.7 (38.39ft) / 4.18 (13.71ft)	
Max. speed (knots)	43	–
Range (miles)	2,100 (at 20 knots)	–
Crew	–	344
Armament	(1941) 5x 130mm/50 B-13; 2x 76.2mm/55 34-K; 2x 45mm/46 21-K; 4x 12.7mm DK; 2x (4x 533mm) tt – one reload; 12x B-1 and 30x M-1 dc	5x 130mm/50 B-13; 2x 76.2mm/55 34-K; 1x twin 76.2mm/55 81-K (German) –replaced by end 1944 with 2x 34-K; 4x 37mm/67.5 70-K; 4x 12.7mm DShK; 2x (4x 533mm) tt – one reload; 12x B-1 and 30x M-1 dc
System notes	–	(1945) RADAR: 291 and SF

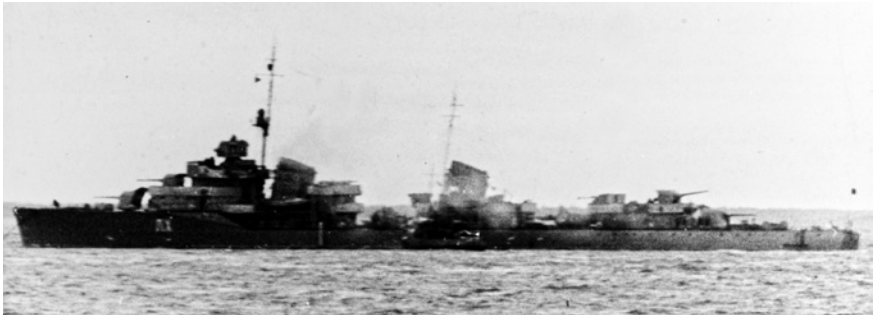
Baku (Project 38) from 25 September 1940, *Sergo Ordzhonikidze* from 25 July 1938 to 25 September 1940, previously *Kiev* to 25 July 1938	
Laid down	15 January 1935 and 10 March 1936
Launched	25 July 1938
Entered service	27 December 1939
Fate	Struck off 2 June 1959

Sergo Ordzhonikidze/Baku specifications		
Year	**1939**	**1944**
Normal displ. (tons)	2,350	2,616
Max. length / max. beam / draught (m)	127.5 (418.31ft) / 11.7 (38.39ft) / 4.18 (13.71ft)	
Max. speed (knots)	42	–
Range (miles)	2,000 (at 20.45 knots)	–
Crew	–	317
Armament	(1941) 5x 130mm/50 B-13; 2x 76.2mm/55 34-K; 2x 45mm/46 21-K; 6x 12.7mm DK; 2x (4x 533mm) tt – one reload; 34x B-1 and 40x M-1 dc	5x 130mm/50 B-13; 2x 76.2mm/55 34-K; 6x 37mm/67.5 70-K (1945 x11); 6x 12.7mm DShK; 2x (4x 533mm) tt – one reload; 34x B-1 and 40x M-1 dc; 4x BMB-1 dc throwers
System notes	–	RADAR: 286M (to SF-1 in 1945, + 284) ASDIC: 'Drakon-128s'

TYPE (PROJECT) 7 AND 7U

Design, development and modification

On the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War, the principal Soviet destroyer strength lay in the Type 7 and modified Type 7U vessels. The design for these vessels stemmed from plans of the late 1920s and early 1930s for new Soviet destroyers that would sit between the Project 1 and 2 vessels in terms of size and capability. Such vessels were initially conceived as being in the region of 1,100 tons, with four 100mm guns, two triple 533mm torpedo



The Type 7U vessel *Likhoi*, from 25 September 1940 *Serditii*, in the Baltic prior to joining the Baltic Fleet. An obvious distinction between the Type 7s and 7Us is the second funnel on the latter. (NH 79299)

tubes and a top speed of 40 knots. Such a conception was informed very much by World War I experience. Soon the naval forces in the Baltic – where such vessels would be most likely to see action – sought something a little heavier and more capable, and primarily a heavier main armament for shore bombardment. From the summer of 1932 as the design was further developed, there was predictable tension between designing capable vessels but keeping displacement down. Soviet designers were now working in co-operation with Italian counterparts, at Ansaldo, who had significant influence on hull form and broad design parameters. Only on 21 December 1934 was the design project for the new destroyer finalised, and given the project number 7. The new destroyers were to be of 1,425 tons standard displacement with a maximum speed of 38 knots and a range of only 1,600 miles at cruising speed. Main armament was to be four single 130mm/50-calibre mounts, with two sets of three 533mm torpedo tubes and a modest anti-aircraft armament of two 76.2mm, two 45mm and two 12.7mm guns. The first vessel of the Type 7s, finally laid down on 27 November 1935, was *Gnevnii*, launched on 13 July 1936 and accepted by the naval forces on 30 October 1938; she entered service on 23 December with the Baltic Fleet. By the end of 1938 she had been joined in the navy by a further six vessels.

E

GREMIASHCHII

One of the best known Type 7s is the Northern Fleet's *Gremiashchii*, which took part in 90 sorties during the war. Constructed in Leningrad, she was transferred to the Northern Fleet in 1939, shortly after entering service on 28 August 1939. After escort and patrol duties during the war with Finland in late 1939, she was under repair from November 1940 to May 1941. At the beginning of the Great Patriotic War she had completed repairs and was ready for what would be very active service. On 30 March 1942 *Gremiashchii* and her sister Type 7 *Sookrushitel'nii* were involved in the defence of the Allied convoy PQ-13 heading for Murmansk. At 1915hrs to the west of Kil'din Island and in heavy seas *Gremiashchii* spotted a U-boat periscope and sped to the point of the sighting. She subsequently launched a number of large and small depth charges. After depth charging the U-boat oil and debris was apparently spotted on the surface, supposedly including some sort of German bag! In the light of such apparent evidence, Soviet sources often claimed a U-boat sunk, although German records do not indicate that this was the case. In all likelihood *Gremiashchii* was indeed attacking a German U-boat, possibly U-435, which was apparently unscathed after her efforts. *Gremiashchii* is pictured here in a variant of a standard disruptive camouflage used by the Northern Fleet throughout the war. Note her Type 286M RADAR antenna – she was the first Type 7 to receive an Allied-supplied RADAR set. At this point – in addition to her main armament of four 130mm/50 B-13 guns and her two sets of triple 533mm torpedo tubes (39-Iu) – she had an anti-aircraft armament of two 76.2mm/55 34-K, four 37mm/67.5 70-K, two twin Colt-Browning 7.62mm and two single DShK 7.62mm heavy machine guns. She also had BMB-1 depth charge launchers installed – desirable for launching a depth charge attack in heavy seas such as those she encountered on 30 March 1942. She would not be fitted with ASDIC until 1943.

The layout of the anti-aircraft armament of a Type 7, probably *Gremiashchii*, including the location of the 76.2mm 34-K guns, is clear in this September 1943 photo of a vessel of the Northern Fleet. Behind her to starboard is *Groznii*. (Sputnik 00060553)

According to plans made in February 1936, the full production run of Type 7 destroyers was supposed to be delivered to the fleet by the time *Gnevnii* and the first batch of Type 7s entered service. Plans of early 1936 were for the construction of a somewhat staggering 53 vessels – 25 to be completed by the end of 1937 and a further 28 by the end of 1938. In early 1936 key factories to be involved in the construction of the destroyers in both the Baltic and Black Sea regions – where the shipbuilding industry was most developed – had yet to lay down their first vessels, and only seven vessels had in fact been launched by the end of 1936. Shipyards on the Black Sea were also to produce prefabricated sections for assembly in the Far East.

Even once under way, construction of the Type 7s went far from smoothly. Built for speed rather than strength and stability, the use of poor quality low-manganese steel in order to speed up construction ultimately meant weaker hulls, a problem exacerbated by poor construction practices. The fact that the Type 7 destroyers had their boilers linked in series would also soon be identified as a serious weakness at an August 1937 meeting of the Defence Committee attended by Stalin. At this meeting it was noted that the British destroyer HMS *Hunter* – with a similar configuration – had lost all power off Spain earlier that month after hitting a mine. This issue was sufficient for the Type 7 programme to be halted and plans for further vessels to be shelved at a time when Soviet ambitions for an ocean-going fleet were still strong. Vessels that could apparently be all too easily immobilized – possibly far from home bases – were not the order of the day. Despite the recommendation from a specialist commission that the vessels already launched be modified to deal with the series boiler issue, and that those on the slipway be scrapped, those Project 7 vessels already in the water were completed according to the initial basic design. The completion of the hull of *Steregushchii* as a Type 7 was pushed through even after the change in plan, and she was launched on 18 January 1938. The alternative to completing those vessels already launched as Type 7s – and two under construction in sections in the West slated for assembly in the Far East – would have been unacceptable delay in the build-up of destroyer strength at a time when the prospect of war was increasing. Ultimately, therefore, 29 Project 7 destroyers were constructed in three series by 1942, although only 28 were handed over to the navy because the incomplete first incarnation of *Reshitel'nii* was lost in a storm in November 1938.

That most of the Type 7 vessels that were still on the slipway in 1937 could be completed as improved Type 7U vessels highlights the fact that the later modified vessels were very similar to their predecessors. In fact, the only meaningful difference between the Type 7s and Type 7Us was in their power systems. In terms of differentiation from the Type 7s, the Type 7Us can be easily identified by their second funnel – a product of having two sets of boilers rather than the series chain in the Type 7s. The first Project 7U vessel to be completed, *Storozhevoi*, had initially been laid down as a Type 7

vessel on 26 August 1936, but was subsequently laid down a second time as a Type 7U in January 1938. Construction of the Type 7U vessels dragged on throughout the Great Patriotic War, by the end of which 18 units had been completed. The last vessel of the type to enter service was *Stroinii*. Although launched on 29 April 1940, she had not completed trials by the time the Great Patriotic War began, and finally completed acceptance trials only after the war.

Rear fire-control station for the main armament and twin Colt-Browning HMG mount on a Type 7 destroyer of the Northern Fleet. (Sovfoto/ MacLaren Art Centre 8431)

Both the Type 7 and Type 7U vessels had a main armament of four 130mm/50-calibre B-13 main mounts, with the exception of the reconstructed *Storozhevoi* which had the front two mounts replaced with a single twin 130mm/50-calibre B-2-LM mount during the war. As is apparent from photographs in this book, there was considerable variation in the design of the single mounts; the B-13-2s mount with rounded edges was introduced after the initial B-13 mount, which had sharp corners, with both mounts appearing on both Type 7s and 7Us. Note also the blast or flash screens forward of the B mount on early Type 7s, including *Gremiashchii* in colour plate E. These screens were later removed – with a blast screen then incorporated into the A mount as in other Type 7 and Type 7Us.

Both the principal and modified types were also armed with two sets of triple 533 torpedo tubes, initially with a full reload. The tubes on most of the Type 7s – 39-Iu – were simply an enlarged version of the 450mm tubes as on the Novik class, although some were later updated. The tubes on the 7U were an improved type – the 1-N – with torpedoes fired through a combination of compressed air and charges from the outset, rather than simply with charges as in the case of the unmodified 39-Iu tubes.

In terms of anti-aircraft capabilities, the Type 7s and Type 7Us were poorly provided for. Not only did they have weak AA firepower, but unlike their main armament their AA guns typically lacked co-ordinated fire direction – in most instances every gun was simply directed by its crew. The 7Us *Sposobnii*, *Svobodnii*, *Strogii* and *Stroinii* were exceptions in having AA

In the foreground *Razumnii*, at base in 1944. In the background, a second Type 7. (TsVMM 23634-6)

Here, the very different layout of the anti-aircraft armament of a Type 7U is evident for, in this case, the *Soobrazitel'nii* of the Black Sea Fleet in March 1942. (Sputnik 00611112)

fire control as constructed. Even later in the war, with additional guns, Type 7s and 7Us were extremely poorly protected from air attack from the bow. Both the Type 7 and 7U had a heavy AA armament, starting with two single 76.2mm 34-K mounts (the Type 7 *Groziashchii* acquired a third at the stern). For the Type 7s these were located between the torpedo tubes – for the Type 7Us aft of them, given the space taken up by the second funnel. The second funnel on the Type 7Us also meant further reorganisation of the AA armament. The Type 7 as of 1938 had an additional AA armament of only two 45mm semi-automatic 21-K mounts and two 12.7mm DK, and earlier Type 7Us such as *Storozhevoi* also started the war with the 21-K mount – three of them. Later 7Us and late 7s dispensed with the 21-K mounts from the outset, and earlier vessels had them replaced, although strangely *Storozhevoi* kept her 21-K mounts even after reconstruction. The 21-K mounts were typically replaced with two or more 37mm automatic 70-K mounts, and by the end of the war there was considerable variation in the number of such mounts. As completed in 1942, the Type 7 *Redkii* had three 37mm mounts, for example, whereas by 1943 *Groziashchii* had four 37mm mounts and *Boikii* five. The Type 7U *Sposobnii* had an impressive seven 70-K mounts, whereas her sister *Svirepii* had only two such mounts and still had her two 21-K mounts in 1943. As one might expect, there was also considerable variation in small-calibre AA armament, the two 12.7mm DK guns (or later DShK) with which the Type

F

RAZUMNII

Given the intensity of operations by the Northern Fleet early in the Great Patriotic War, and in particular in defence of Allied convoys, the decision was taken to reinforce the Northern Fleet with destroyers from the Pacific Fleet. One of those destroyers that made the treacherous passage across the Arctic in the summer of 1942 was *Razumnii*. *Razumnii* had first been laid down in July 1936 as *Prochnii* at Nikolaev on the Black Sea, and was laid down a second time in the Far East in August 1937 after she was transported eastwards in more than 110 sections, blocks and crates over approximately 40 days. She was finally launched on 30 June 1939. She became *Razumnii* on 7 December 1940 before at last entering service on 7 January 1942. On 18 June 1942 she was ordered to the Northern Fleet – in the end joined by her sister *Raz"iarennii* and the Project 38 leader *Baku*. For the passage *Razumnii*'s hull was specially strengthened with a wood and metal belt to protect it from ice damage, and that belt is visible above the waterline in this artwork plate which shows her as part of EON-18 or Special Expedition 18 – assisted by icebreakers – making its way across the Arctic Sea Route. Prior to setting off across the Arctic *Razumnii*'s AA armament had been strengthened, with two 45mm/46 21-K being replaced with three 37mm/67.5 70-K. At this time she also received her two BMB-1 depth charge throwers, fitted at the stern. Either immediately before or after her Arctic crossing two twin 12.7mm Colt-Browning HMGs were also added. She is pictured here in the grey finish of vessels of the Pacific Fleet.

ABOVE LEFT
Often identified as *Gremiashchii*, this is in fact *Raz"iarennii* returning to Kola in August 1943. In the foreground is an M-4 type subchaser. (TsVMM 28865-1)

ABOVE RIGHT
Razumnii, now at sea, taken from one of HMS *Chaser's* aircraft in Kola Bay in March 1944. (IWM A 22471)

7s started being joined by an additional two twin 12.7mm Browning mounts for vessels of the Northern Fleet and some 7Us, for example, with a very much non-standard quadruple 12.7mm Vickers mount for *Groziashchii* by 1943.

All of the Type 7 and Type 7U vessels were equipped with depth charges and paravanes and were capable of laying mines. Later vessels were provided with two BMB-1 depth charge throwers during construction, along with degaussing equipment – others retrofitted during the war where possible. Vessels completed during the war also had their hulls strengthened during construction – others retroactively. As with all of the vessels mentioned in this book, the wartime addition of RADAR and ASDIC greatly enhanced their capabilities in theory, although a number of Russian authors have pointed out that wartime crews were not necessarily able to use ASDIC effectively. The first of the Type 7/7Us to receive an ASDIC set was *Groznii* in 1942, soon followed by *Gremiashchii*. *Gremiashchii* was the first to receive a RADAR set – initially a 286M set. By the end of the war surviving Type 7s and Type 7Us had been fitted with a number of different RADAR sets – typically 291 sets. *Bodrii* and *Boikii* had received 286 sets by the end of the war, *Groznii* and *Raz"iarennii* US-supplied SF-1 sets, *Razumnii* both a 291 and an SL set, and *Gromkii*, *Strogii* and *R'ianii* domestic 'Giuis-1' sets – with *Gromkii* also getting an SL set.

Wartime service

Type 7 vessels served with all four of the Soviet wartime fleets, some seeing limited action prior to the Great Patriotic War in operations against Poland and Finland. In the Baltic *Stremitel'nii* was, for example, involved in the hunt for Polish submarines off Estonia between 24 and 26 September 1939, and *Steregushchii* in the bombardment of Finnish shore batteries in December 1939.

Seven Type 7s served in the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War, five surviving despite intensive use. *Gremiashchii*, *Gromkii*, *Groznii* and *Sookrushitel'nii* were transferred from the Baltic to the Northern Fleet in 1939, and *Stremitel'nii* in 1940. *Raz"iarennii* and *Razumnii* transferred to the Northern from the Pacific Fleet in 1942, making the hazardous passage across the Northern Sea Route in order to do so – the latter shown doing so in colour plate F. Of those vessels serving with the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War, *Stremitel'nii* was sunk at base during an air attack on

20 July 1941 and *Sookrushitel'nii* was lost in a storm on 20 November 1942 after she had lost her stern along with one of her 130mm guns – highlighting the weakness of the Type 7 hull. Immediately after this incident the hulls of many Type 7s and 7Us were strengthened. The remaining Type 7s all saw intensive use, in particular in the convoy escort role. *Gremiashchii* is shown in action in this role in colour plate E.

A larger number of Type 7s served in the Baltic, being intensively employed early in the war and experiencing heavy losses. During the first months of the war *Gnevnii*, *Gordii* and *Smetlivii* were all lost to mines – *Gnevnii* was sunk by her own side after having hit a German mine on only the second day of the war (23 June 1941), and *Smetlivii* was lost to mines on 4 November 1941 when returning with evacuated personnel from the Soviet base at Khanko. *Gordii* was then lost to the same cause on 14 November 1941 while en route to evacuate more Soviet garrison personnel from Khanko. *Steregushchii* was however sunk at Kronstadt on 21 September 1941 by air attack, although she was subsequently raised in June 1944. Of the Baltic Type 7s, *Groziashchii* alone was not sunk, despite having suffered significant damage from both mines and air attack.

In the Black Sea *Bditel'nii*, *Bezuprechnii*, *Besposhchadnii* and *Bistrii* were all sunk by air attack, the last of these having first been crippled by a magnetic mine on 1 July 1941 before later finally being finished off at Sevastopol' where she was theoretically to have been repaired despite extensive damage. *Bistrii*'s main armament ended up being used by German forces as part of shore batteries. *Bezuprechnii* was sunk by German aircraft en route to Sevastopol' on 26 July 1942 whilst carrying troops of 142 (Naval) Rifle Brigade – all 320 of whom were killed. *Besposhchadnii* was sunk during the disastrous sortie with the leader *Khar'kov* and Type 7U *Sposobnii* to bombard Feodosiia on 5–6 October 1943. The last of the Black Sea Type 7s lost to air attack was *Bditel'nii*, sunk at Novorossiisk on 2 July 1942 as a result of a torpedo explosion following air attack. *Bodrii* and *Boikii* survived the war, although *Bodrii* suffered heavy damage on 16 July 1942 following a direct hit by an aerial bomb at Poti, as a result of which her stern was almost severed off.

Crew members of the *Gremiashchii* of the Northern Fleet are 'entertained' in July 1943. Note the sharp lines of her forward turrets compared to the variants for *Svobodnii* and *Soobrazitel'nii*. Note also the absence of the blast screen forward of the B mount by this point. (TsVMM 28793-1)

ABOVE LEFT
Gremiashchii of the Northern Fleet, reading to engage enemy aircraft and sporting a standard disruptive camouflage in September 1942. Here she still has her forward blast screen. (TASS/Getty 522576188)

ABOVE RIGHT
Gremiashchii returns to base, 1943. (TsVMM 27793)

The remaining Type 7s served in the Pacific. *Rezkii*, *Rekordnii*, *R'ianii*, *Rezvii*, *Raziarshchii* and *Rastoropnii* were all in service by the start of the Great Patriotic War. *Reshitel'nii*, *Retivii*, *Redkii*, and *Revnostnii* joined the Pacific Fleet in August–November 1941 – the first of these a second incarnation of a Type 7 with that name. *Revnostnii* was supposed to have transferred to the Northern Fleet in July 1942, but as a result of heavy damage suffered in a collision with a transport early on in her passage was left behind. None of the Type 7s fired their guns in anger during the brief war against the Japanese in August–September 1945, although they did participate in landing reinforcements on Sakhalin.

All of the Type 7U vessels served either in the Baltic or in the Black Sea. Of the vessels that served in the Baltic, *Skorii*, *Strashnii* and *Svirepii* entered service during the war, the latter two on 22 and 23 June 1941 respectively, and *Skorii* on 1 August. *Stroinii* and *Strogii* raised the naval ensign on 20 and 30 August 1941 respectively, but did not formally enter service with the Baltic Fleet until 11 and 10 December 1945 after they had finally completed trials. *Strogii* and *Stroinii* nonetheless saw meaningful wartime service as floating batteries. During 1941 alone *Stroinii* expended 2,387 rounds of 130mm ammunition in the fire-support role, and *Strogii* 2,234. Other Type 7U vessels also spent much of the war providing fire support to ground forces from the Leningrad area. *Stoikii* and *Svirepii* spent much of the war as floating batteries – the former renamed *Vitse-admiral Drozd* on 13 February 1943. Also bottled up in Leningrad for much of the war, *Slavnii* was out of action for a considerable period on different occasions, having been damaged by a mine, aerial bombs and artillery fire – and suffered the ignominy of sinking a Soviet MO-112 submarine chaser on 4 November 1941 during the evacuation of Khanko after the chaser had been mistaken for a Finnish boat.

The captain of the *Soobrazitel'nii*, Captain Vorkov, and fellow officers on the bridge in May 1943. Behind him is a DShK heavy machine gun. (Sputnik 00613556)

Those vessels held in Leningrad from the winter of 1941–42 through to 1944 had at least survived the period of Soviet retreat in 1941. *Serditii* – briefly *Likhoi* – had been lost to air attack on 19 July 1941 when docked at the Moonzund Islands, while *Smelii*, *Surovii*, *Skorii* and *Statnii* were all

lost in part or wholly due to mines. On 27 July 1941 *Smelii* initially had her bow destroyed by a mine after she herself had been minelaying, and was subsequently subjected to further damage from air attack – before ultimately being finished off by Soviet torpedo boats. *Statnii* was lost on 18 August to a magnetic mine in the Gulf of Riga, *Skorii* was sunk off Tallinn on 28 August while assisting the leader *Minsk*, and *Surovii* was lost to a mine en route to Khanko on 14 November 1941. *Strashnii* came close to being lost, first being heavily damaged due to air attack on 14 and 15 July before then hitting a mine on 16 July. Back in service from April 1942 *Strashnii* served out the war in the fire-support role like many of her sisters. In 1941–42 *Sil'nii* survived a number of hits by aerial bombs and shells, and the opportunity was subsequently taken to heavily modify her in the sense of having her armament and systems augmented. She received a 'Drakon-128s' ASDIC set in September–October 1942, and a 286 RADAR set in November 1943 – later replaced with a 291 set.

The final Type 7U serving in the Baltic was *Storozhevoi*, which would be even more heavily modified during the war than *Sil'nii*, ultimately receiving a Type 30/7U categorization in view of the scale of her modification. *Storozhevoi* was also one of the few Type 7Us involved in a surface action, although her crew were not apparently aware of it until the ship was struck by a torpedo fired from the German motor torpedo boats S31 and S59 during the night of 26–27 June 1941. *Storozhevoi* remained afloat and was towed back to Tallinn, Kronstadt, and finally Leningrad. After suffering damage from artillery fire in April 1942 she underwent repairs that involved her forward reconstruction as a late or post-war Type 30, re-entering service on 10 September 1943.

Once again on board the Type 7U *Soobrazitel'nii*. Here crew members work on the ship's newspaper. Behind them two of her B-13-2s mounts. (Sovfoto/ MacLaren Art Centre 8238)

Of those Type 7U vessels that served in the Black Sea, only *Smishlennii* and *Soobrazitel'nii* had entered service when the war began – *Sposobnii* and *Svobodnii* did so on 24 June 1941 and 7 January 1942 respectively. *Smishlennii* and *Sovershennii* were both lost in part to Soviet mines – the latter not having formally entered service. After participating in the bombardment of Constanza at the end of June 1941 and then in the defences of Odessa and Sevastopol', on 6 March 1942 en route back to Novorossiisk *Smishlennii* hit a Soviet mine. The following day she foundered, surviving crew in the water being killed as the vessel was being evacuated when depth charges exploded – leaving only two survivors. On 30 September 1941 *Sovershennii* hit a mine on trials, as a result of damage from which she had to be towed to Sevastopol' and put in dry dock. On 12 November she was further damaged during an air attack, and the dry dock in which she was being repaired flooded. After her main armament had been removed for use in shore batteries, on 8 June 1942 after refloating she was finally sunk during an air attack. *Svobodnii* and *Sposobnii* were also lost to air attack. *Svobodnii* was lost on 10 June 1942 whilst at the quayside at Sevastopol'. Hit by nine bombs, her fate was sealed when fire led to an ammunition explosion. *Sposobnii* was lost during the early evening of 6 October during the infamous sortie with *Khar'kov* and *Besposhchadnii* to shell Feodosiia – the last of the three ships participating to be sunk. The sole surviving Type 7U

The Type 7 destroyer *Svobodnii*, sunk at the quayside at Sevastopol' in June 1942. (Sputnik 00000127)

in the Black Sea was then *Soobrazitel'nii*. Having escorted the damaged *Khar'kov* back to base after the shelling of Constanza in late June 1941 – during which she is assumed to have sunk the Soviet submarine *Shch-206* that attacked *Khar'kov* in error – she then during the remainder of 1941 participated in the defence of Odessa and landings at Kerch'. Having participated in the evacuation and defence of Feodosiia and defence of the Caucasus in 1942–43, after repairs in August 1943 she saw no further action. *Soobrazitel'nii* is the subject of colour plate G, as she was equipped in 1943

Type 7 *R'ianii*	
Laid down	31 December 1935 and 18 September 1936
Launched	31 May 1937
Entered service	17 August 1939
Fate	Sunk as target, 8 January 1961

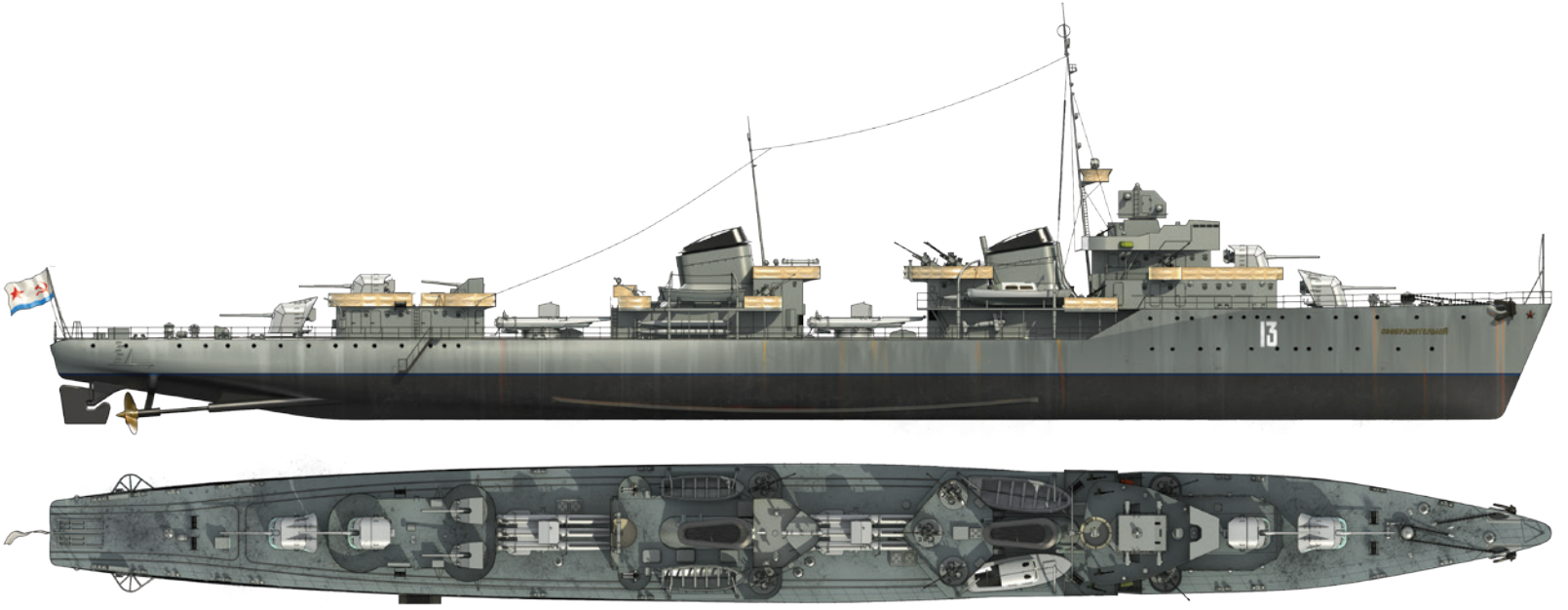
Type 7 *R'ianii* specifications		
Year	**1939**	**1944**
Normal displ. (tons)	(standard displ. 1,606)	2,117 (standard displ. 1,855)
Max. length / max. beam / draught (m)	112.85 (370.24ft) / 10.23 (33.56ft) / 4.77 (15.65ft)	
Max. speed (knots)	38.6	–
Range (miles)	2,700 (at 19 knots?)	2,565 (at 19 knots)
Crew	<200	236
Armament	4x 130mm/50 B-13; 2x 76.2mm/55 34-K; 2x 45mm/46 21-K; 2x 12.7mm DK; 2x (3x 533mm) tt – one reload; 10x B-1 and 15x M-1 dc; 2x BMB-1 dc throwers	4x 130mm/50 B-13; 2x 76.2mm/55 34-K; 3x 37mm/67.5 70-K; 2x 12.7mm DK and 2x 12.7mm DShK; 2x (3x 533mm) tt – one reload; 20x B-1 and 27x M-1 dc; 2x BMB-1 dc throwers
System notes	–	RADAR: 'Giuis-1'

Type 7U *Storozhevoi*	
Laid down	26 August 1936 and January 1938
Launched	2 October 1938
Entered service	6 October 1940 (10 September 1943 as 30/7U)
Fate	Struck off 1958

G

SOOBRAZITEL'NII

Type 7U vessels only served in the Baltic and Black Seas during the Great Patriotic War, and here the Black Sea Fleet's *Soobrazitel'nii* is shown in 1943 with the pennant number 13. She had started her life as *Prozorlivii*, before becoming *Soobrazitel'nii* on 25 September 1940. She entered service on 7 June 1941 – a considerable time after having been first laid down as a Type 7 on 15 October 1936. She had the pennant number 33 from the start of their use on 15 June 1941 through to 19 July 1942. The second funnel is an obvious distinguishing feature of the Type 7Us over Type 7s, also meaning a different layout for anti-aircraft armament. Here, in addition to her main armament of four 130mm/50 B-13-2s mounts and two sets of three 533mm torpedo tubes (1-N), she has a heavily augmented anti-aircraft armament. In addition to two 76.2mm/55 34-K mounts, she has seven 37mm/67.5 70-K, two twin Colt-Browning 7.62mm and four 7.62mm DShK heavy machine guns. She is pictured here in a standard grey finish of vessels of the Black Sea Fleet.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Type 7U *Storozhevoi* specifications		
Year	**1941**	**1944 (Type 30/7U)**
Normal displ. (tons)	2,002 (1,936 in 1939)	2,256
Max. length / max. beam / draught (m)	112.5 (369.09ft) / 10.2 (33.46ft) / 3.98 (13.06ft)	113.5 (372.38ft)/ 10.2 (33.46ft) / 4.6 (15.09ft)
Max. speed (knots)	40.28	38.9
Range (miles)	2,773 (at 19.83 knots)	1,800 (at 17 knots)
Crew	207	267
Armament	4x 130mm/50 B-13; 2x 76.2mm/55 34-K; 3x 45mm/46 21-K; 4x 12.7mm DK; 2x (3x 533mm) tt – one reload; 40x B-1 and 27x M-1 dc	1x twin 130mm/50 B-2-LM, 2x 130mm/50 B-13; 3x 76.2mm/55 34-K; 2x 45mm/46 21-K; 4x 37mm/67.5 70-K; 4x 12.7mm DShK; 2x (3x 533mm) tt – one reload; 10x B-1 and 24x M-1 dc
System notes	–	RADAR: 291

TASHKENT

Design, development and modification

Inadequacies evident during the construction of the Project 1 leaders – only partially remedied with their Project 38 successors – highlighted the Soviet need for foreign expertise in the construction of such modern warships that could combine seaworthiness and endurance with speed and armament. A search for willing foreign partners led to the order of an *esploratore veloce* or 'fast scout' from the Italian firm Odero-Terni-Orlando in 1935, with the agreement ultimately being for the Italians to deliver the vessel without armament and to provide assistance in the construction of a second such vessel in the Soviet Union. Although it was to be delivered without armament, it was intended that the vessel would be armed with six 130mm guns in three twin turrets, along with six 45mm semi-automatic guns, six '13mm' machine guns and three triple 533mm torpedo tubes (39-lu). For the main armament the Soviet naval leadership opted to design and build a new twin gun mount given the index reference B-31. By the time the leader was nearing completion the B-31 mount was not in evidence, and ultimately the decision was taken to use the similar B-2-LM mount intended for Project 48 leaders and Project 30 destroyers. *Tashkent* would ultimately be armed with modified twin B-2-LM mounts that required some strengthening of the hull for their accommodation, but these would not be installed until after the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. In the meantime, from entering service in October 1940 she was armed with single B-13 mounts. At the beginning

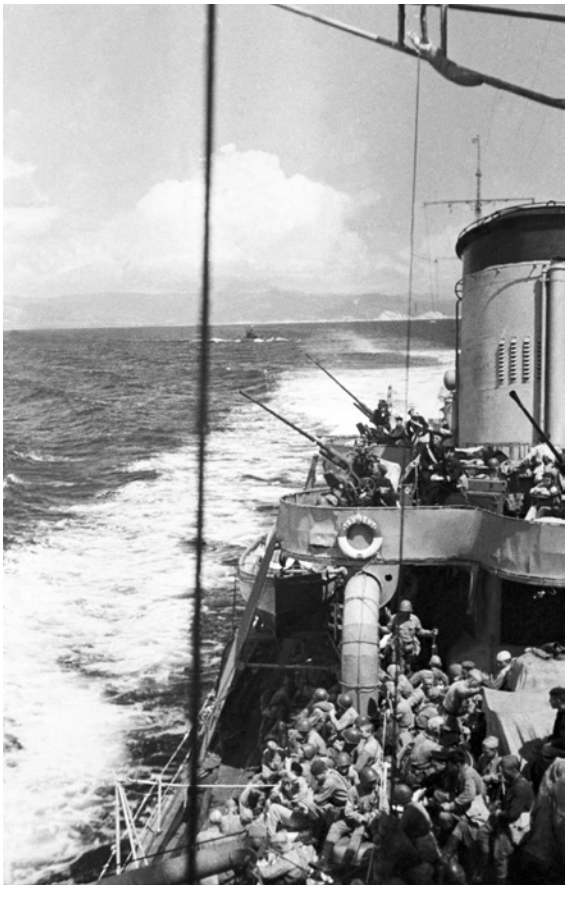
The leader *Tashkent* without her armament, as delivered to the Soviet Union from Italy in 1938. (The Macpherson Collection/ TMM)

Tashkent in heavy seas in May 1942, now with her intended armament. (Sovfoto/ MacLaren Art Centre 3112left)

of the Great Patriotic War the 21-K 45mm semi-automatic guns initially installed were also replaced with 70-K 37mm automatic guns provided in addition to her six 12.7mm machine guns. In addition, *Tashkent* could act as a minelayer, carrying 76 mines, and was provided with a single set of paravane mine sweeping gear. She was also given a modest complement of depth charges: 20 M-1 and 4 B-1. Only in late July 1941 – having moved from Nikolaev to Sevastopol' – was she provided with degaussing gear.

Tashkent's considerable size even for a destroyer leader is apparent in this photograph of June 1942 as she ferried troops from Novorossiisk to Sevastopol'. (TASS/Getty 522602922)

Tashkent was undoubtedly an improvement on the Project 1 and 38 leaders – by the standards of the early 1940s a genuine destroyer leader with a fully loaded displacement of over 4,000 tons rather than a large destroyer as in the case of the Project 1 and 38 vessels. She had not only the main armament and the speed, but also a range of more than 5,000 miles at 20 knots and superior seakeeping qualities to those of her smaller Soviet brethren. Her anti-aircraft armament left something to be desired, however – her 37mm anti-aircraft guns being unable to engage with targets flying above 2,500 metres. During the war an attempt was made to deal with this issue with the addition at the stern of a twin 39-K 76.2mm/55-calibre anti-aircraft mount intended for the Project 30 destroyer *Ognevoi*. Even before *Tashkent* had been delivered in the spring of 1939 it became apparent that replicating Italian shipbuilding in the Soviet Union would be far from viable, and, although at one point three had been envisaged, the Soviet Union now declined to construct any more of what had been designation Project 20 vessels. That left *Tashkent* as the only vessel of its type in the Soviet navy, and she would serve in the Black Sea Fleet until sunk in 1942.



Wartime service

Tashkent's wartime service was somewhat limited in scope although not intensity, and she spent much of her short lifetime acting as a troop transport. Only briefly in mid-August 1941 did

she operate with Soviet destroyers in what might be seen as her principal intended role, conducting a sweep in the western portion of the Black Sea for enemy shipping. She was soon committed to fire support for ground forces near Odessa that same month, off which she was heavily damaged by German aircraft and subsequently repaired at Sevastopol'. Her anti-aircraft armament was clearly inadequate, and at this point the 39-K anti-aircraft mount was added to her stern. Given the threat of German air attack at Sevastopol' by the autumn she was moved eastwards, and subsequently operated primarily from Novorossiisk. Other than some brief escort work she would be engaged in fire support and supply and troop transport tasks for Soviet forces in the Crimea, and particularly Sevastopol'. As the situation at Sevastopol' deteriorated in the late spring and early summer of 1942, after a brief period under repair she was in demand as a high-speed transport for troops and munitions to and from the besieged city. On 26 June 1942 *Tashkent* left Sevastopol' with more than 2,000 wounded and evacuees aboard. During the late afternoon she came under heavy air attack over a four-hour period and was heavily damaged, taking on nearly 2,000 tons of water. Having unloaded 1,975 of her passengers to the *Soobrazitel'nii* she was able to limp back to Novorossiisk under tow. There, on 2 July she was finished off by German aircraft at the quayside as preparations were being made to move her to Poti. Her armament was soon removed, and she was subsequently only raised in 1944 and then scrapped because of the extent to which she had been damaged.

Tashkent	
Laid down	11 January 1937
Launched	28 December 1937
Entered service	22 October 1940
Fate	Sunk during air attack, 2 July 1942. Subsequently raised in 1944 and scrapped.

***Tashkent* specifications**	
Year	**1942**
Normal displ. (tons)	3,216
Max. length / max. beam / draught (m)	139.7 (458.33ft) / 13.7 (44.95ft) / 4.2 (13.78ft)
Max. speed (knots)	42.7
Range (miles)	5,030 (at 20 knots)
Crew	250
Armament	3x twin 130mm/50 B-2-LM; 1x 76.2mm/55 39-K; 6x 37mm/67.5 70-K; 6x 12.7mm DShK; 3x (3x 533mm) tt – no reloads; 20x M-1 and 4x B-1 dc
System notes	–

OPITNII (PROJECT 45)

A single Project 45 destroyer saw very limited service during the Great Patriotic War, playing a small role in the defence of Leningrad. Laid down on 26 June 1935 as *Sergo Ordzhonikidze*, the vessel that would become *Opitnii* in September 1940 was to be the lead vessel in a class of ships of similar armament and displacement to the Type 7s but with far greater range and a much higher speed – comparable to the Project 1 leaders. Like the Type 7s

and Project 1s, her design owed much to Italian principles. An ambitious target speed of 45 knots was supposed to be achieved through installing high-pressure boilers and significant use of welding. On trials in 1941 *Opitnii* could manage only a respectable 35 knots. Her range according to data for 1943 was 1,370 miles at 18 knots – comparable to that for a later Type 7 or 7U and well under half that intended in the mid-1930s. The Soviet naval ensign was only finally raised on *Opitnii* on 11 September 1941, despite the vessel having been launched on 8 December 1935, less than six months from being laid down. Not only did she not live up to expectations in having a maximum speed and range similar to that of a Type 7, but she also ended up with a weaker main armament because in the absence of available twin 130mm turrets she was armed with three single B-13 mounts instead. From August 1941 she was deployed as a floating battery in the defence of Leningrad. During her period of service as a floating battery *Opitnii* suffered significant damage from enemy artillery fire, and from October 1941–June 1942 her main armament was removed. With her main armament re-installed, she served only for another year before being placed in reserve in July 1943 and put into conservation in March 1944. Some effort was put into finally completing her after the war, before she was finally scrapped in 1952.

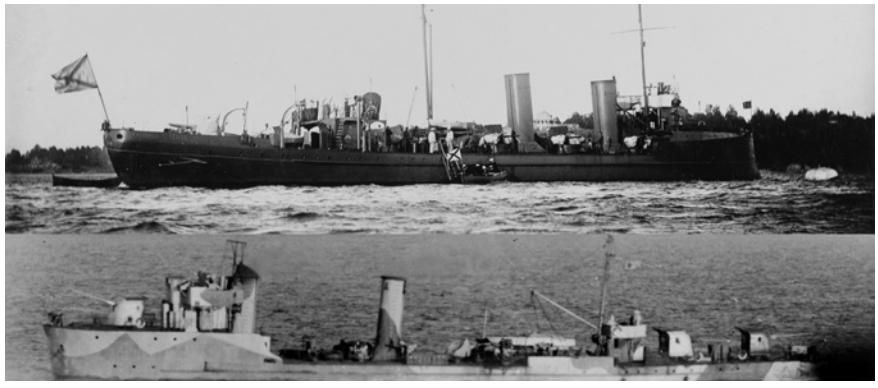
The Project 45 vessel *Opitnii* fires her 130mm guns from her mooring in Leningrad in March 1943. (TASS/Getty 522575284)

Opitnii* (Project 45) from 25 September 1940, previously *Sergo Ordzhonikidze	
Laid down	26 June 1935
Launched	8 December 1935
Entered service	Temporary service 17 August 1941
Fate	Scrapped early 1952

***Opitnii* specifications**	
Year	**1943**
Normal displ. (tons)	1,707
Max. length / max. beam / draught (m)	113.5 (372.38ft) / 10.2 (33.46ft) / 3.98 (13.06ft)
Max. speed (knots)	35
Range (miles)	1,370 (at 18 knots)
Crew	262
Armament	3x 130mm/50 B-13; 4x 45mm/46 21-K; 3x 37mm/67.5 70-K; 2x 12.7mm DK; 1x twin 12.7mm Colt-Browning; 2x (4x 533mm) tt – half reload; 10x B-1 and 28x M-1 dc
System notes	–

KONSTRUKTOR

Included here by virtue of her displacement, original role and the novelty of her transformation over time is the former tsarist destroyer *Sibirskii strelok* – from the end of 1926 *Konstruktor*. Laid down in Helsingfors – later Helsinki – in 1905, she was completed and entered service with the



The pre-World War I tsarist destroyer *Sibirskii strelok* in 1905 (top), and then as the *Konstruktor* in Soviet service as a *kanonerskaia lodka* or gunboat in 1944. (NH 60746/79306)

Baltic Fleet in 1906. *Sibirskii strelok* was arguably outdated by World War I, but nonetheless due to her relatively good condition survived to enter Soviet service, remaining there until well after the Great Patriotic War. The summer of 1941 saw *Konstruktor* classified as a *storozhevoi korabl'* or guard ship and in service with the Ladoga Naval Flotilla. She was sunk – with considerable loss of life both amongst her crew and evacuees on board – as a result of German air attack on 4 November 1941 at Osinovets, having seen action in a fire-support and evacuation role for Soviet forces in the lake region. During the attack her bow had been blown off, but she was raised and repaired, and re-entered service in April 1943 – this time with a much shorter bow. In this incarnation as a gunboat (*kanonerskaia lodka*), she was to see further action with the Ladoga Naval Flotilla in supporting both landing operations and ground forces.

Konstruktor* from 10 December 1926, previously *Sibirskii strelok	
Laid down	1905
Launched	1906
Entered service	1906 (after reconstruction 13 April 1943)
Fate	Struck off 1957

***Konstruktor* specifications**	
Year	**1943**
Normal displ. (tons)	785 (820 fully loaded)
Max. length / max. beam / draught (m)	60.5 (198.49ft) / 8.15 (26.74ft) / 3.25 (10.66ft)
Max. speed (knots)	16
Range (miles)	1,000 (at 11 knots)
Crew	105
Armament	3x 100mm/56 B-24-BM; 2x 45mm/46 21-K; 2x 37mm/67.5 70-K; 1x 20mm/65; 3x 12.7mm DShK
System notes	–

CONCLUSION

On the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War the Soviet destroyer force in many ways lagged behind both its allies and its opponents. Although they had strong main armaments, Soviet destroyers lacked not only adequate

AA armament and AA fire control, but also RADAR and ASDIC/SONAR systems in operation elsewhere. Soviet destroyers tended also to be top-heavy and poor sea boats – with hulls far from adequate for the harsh northern waters on which much Soviet naval activity would be focused as the war progressed. These absences and inadequacies were exacerbated by human factors such as poor training. Such issues undoubtedly contributed to the heavy losses suffered by the Soviet destroyer force during 1941–42 in particular. As the war progressed foreign technology – and particularly RADAR and ASDIC – in theory enhanced the capabilities of Soviet destroyers, but inadequate training hampered in particular the use of ASDIC. Nonetheless, by the end of the war Soviet destroyers had much better anti-aircraft armaments even if they lacked suitable fire control. It was really after the war that Soviet warship design and construction would leap forward, in particular in the light of both Allied technology and experience with Allied-supplied vessels.

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Author's Note

A note on transliteration: I have kept ″ and ′ to represent hard and soft signs respectively in the Russian original for Russian ship and place names.

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Dedication

To my father, Brian Hill

Title page image

The Uragan-class vessel *Groza* sporting a non-standard disruptive camouflage in the north early in the Great Patriotic War. (TsVMM 33237)